



United States Government Accountability Office

Report to Congressional Requesters



March 2022

# CAPITOL ATTACK

## Additional Actions Needed to Better Prepare Capitol Police Officers for Violent Demonstrations

Accessible Version

## Why GAO Did This Study

On January 6, 2021, thousands of demonstrators surrounded the U.S. Capitol Building to dispute the outcome of the 2020 presidential election. Demonstrators attacked and injured law enforcement officers and breached the building. The Capitol Police is responsible for protecting the Congress, including members, staff, visitors, and facilities.

GAO was asked to review a range of issues related to the events surrounding the January 6 attack. This fourth report addresses (1) how the Capitol Police prepared its officers to use force and maintain crowd control during large-scale demonstrations prior to the attack; (2) reported use of force during the attack; (3) Capitol Police officer perspectives on their preparedness for the attack; and (4) changes made to better prepare officers in the future.

GAO reviewed Capitol Police policies and training for use of force and crowd control. GAO analyzed the use of force reports from January 6, 2021, which describe the types of force used and supervisors' determinations on whether the force was justified. GAO also conducted a survey of Capitol Police officers who were on duty at any point on January 6. GAO received responses from 315 officers, a 20 percent response rate. Although not generalizable to all officers on duty that day, the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness. GAO also interviewed department officials and reviewed documents on actions taken since the attack.

View [GAO-22-104829](#). For more information, contact Gretta L. Goodwin at (202) 512-8777 or [GoodwinG@gao.gov](mailto:GoodwinG@gao.gov).

March 2022

## CAPITOL ATTACK

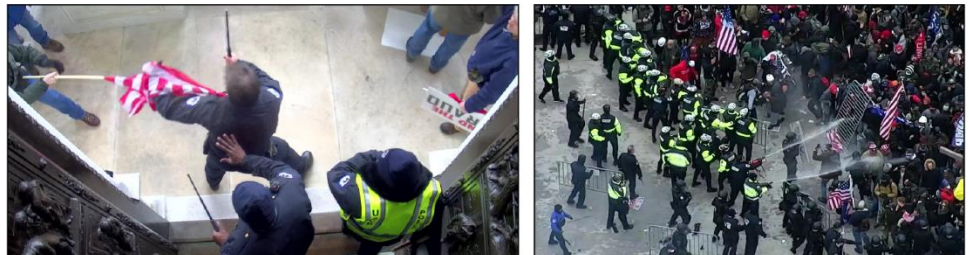
### Additional Actions Needed to Better Prepare Capitol Police Officers for Violent Demonstrations

## What GAO Found

The U.S. Capitol Police (Capitol Police) used a range of methods to prepare its officers to use force and maintain crowd control prior to the January 6, 2021 attack. At the time of the attack, the department had established department-wide use of force and crowd control policies. The department sends new officers to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers and its own Capitol Police Academy for training. The Capitol Police provides all officers with 40 hours of entry-level Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) training, even if they are not ultimately assigned to the unit. The department equips and trains all officers on the use of a baton, chemical spray, and a firearm, and some officers are trained on other types of force, such as less-lethal munitions (e.g., chemical and kinetic impact).

About 150 Capitol Police officers reported 293 use of force incidents using various types of force against attackers on January 6. After the events, the Capitol Police determined that all use of force incidents were justified. The most prevalent force reported was empty hand control techniques (e.g., pushing) (91 incidents), followed by batons (83) (left image below), withdrawing a firearm from its holster (37), chemical spray (34) (right image below), other physical tactics (22), pointing a firearm at an individual (17), less-lethal munitions (7), a diversionary device (1), and firing a firearm (1).

#### Images of the Attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021



Source: U.S. Capitol Police. | GAO-22-104829

GAO surveyed officers who were deployed during the January 6 attack. Based on the nongeneralizable responses from the 315 officers who completed the survey, GAO found the following:

- **Some officers felt less prepared.** There were mixed views among respondents on whether they felt prepared to use force and apply crowd control tactics during the January 6 attack. Related to use of force, 207 felt well or somewhat prepared and 96 felt slightly or not at all prepared. Related to crowd control tactics, 134 felt well or somewhat prepared and 153 felt slightly or not at all prepared.
- **Lack of sufficient guidance before and during the attack.** Most respondents indicated that preoperational guidance (211) or guidance provided during the attack (209) was slightly clear, not at all clear, or not provided. In comparison, fewer respondents indicated that preoperational guidance (45) or guidance during the attack (29) was somewhat or very clear.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO is making five recommendations to the Capitol Police to take actions to

- better understand officers' comprehension of the department's expectations and policies related to use of force, including identifying underlying causes for potential officer hesitancy to use force;
- make changes, as appropriate, to policy, guidance, and training to address findings from actions taken to better understand officers' comprehension of the department's expectations and policies related to the use of force;
- provide more refresher crowd control training to prepare all officers, including those who are not part of the CDU, for large-scale and potentially violent demonstrations;
- provide officers with more realistic training; and
- identify underlying factors related to employee concerns with the department following the January 6 attack and develop an action plan to address these issues.

Capitol Police agreed with all five recommendations.

Based on responses to open-ended questions, GAO identified several common themes among respondents:

- **Perceived discouragement from using force.** Many respondents (80) identified concerns related to use of force, including that they felt discouraged or hesitant to use force because of a fear of disciplinary actions (57); and that leadership needed to clarify the appropriate use of force during situations like the January 6 attack (39).
- **More training wanted.** Over half of respondents (180) expressed that more training was needed, including crowd control (128), very large or violent crowd control (84), and more realistic training (46).
- **Concerns with the department.** Many respondents (151) identified concerns or offered suggestions related to leadership, including that there had been a lack of leadership and communication on January 6, 2021 (99); and that leadership needed to be changed or improved (55).

The Capitol Police has taken actions to better prepare officers following the attack but additional opportunities exist to further enhance preparedness.

- **Use of force.** The Capitol Police has taken actions to clarify use of force, such as issuing additional guidance to officers and conducting briefings in which its Office of General Counsel addressed common misconceptions related to use of force. However, in October 2021, officials stated that misconceptions related to use of force have been persistent both before and after the attack. The department's discussions with officers following the attack are a positive step, but based on GAO survey results, such discussions may not have addressed underlying factors related to officer hesitancy to use force. Taking actions to better understand officers' comprehension of the use of force policy will help Capitol Police ensure that management and officer expectations are aligned.
- **Training and equipment.** The Capitol Police has trained additional officers on crowd control tactics and less-lethal force and obtained additional protective and less-lethal force equipment using supplemental appropriations. However, officials stated that their current focus is on improving training for the CDU and that they do not have plans to improve training for non-CDU officers. Yet, non-CDU officers, who represent more than 80 percent of officers, may also be called upon to provide crowd control in emergencies. Further, officials stated that offering more realistic training (e.g., in-person) is challenging because it requires that officers be pulled from their posts, which may lead to paying officers for overtime. While there may be challenges in providing more in-person training, the Capitol Police must balance its need to staff officers to posts to perform their law enforcement duties with the need to train them to effectively accomplish those duties. Enhancing crowd control training for all Capitol Police officers, including non-CDU officers and more realistic training, will help ensure that all officers are better prepared in the future.
- **Concerns with the department and morale.** The department used 2021 supplemental appropriations to fund retention bonuses, hazard pay, and initiatives related to mental health. However, officials stated that the department has faced long-term morale issues. For example, analysis of the Capitol Police's employee viewpoint surveys since 2016 identified similar themes shown by GAO's survey, such as concerns related to morale, promotions, and leadership. Given the severity of the attack and the likely long-standing nature of the concerns, matters may not be resolved quickly. In light of GAO's survey findings and the Capitol Police's forthcoming employee viewpoint survey for 2021, there is an opportunity for the department to identify underlying causes for employee concerns and develop a responsive action plan.

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**Abbreviations**

CDU	Civil Disturbance Unit
CERT	Containment and Emergency Response Team
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
FLETC	Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers

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March 7, 2022

### Congressional Requesters

On January 6, 2021, thousands of demonstrators surrounded the U.S. Capitol Building to dispute the outcome of the 2020 presidential election. Demonstrators also attacked and injured law enforcement officers and breached the building, leading to the lockdown of the Capitol complex and evacuation of lawmakers and staff.<sup>1</sup> Over the course of about 7 hours, the attackers assaulted police officers, including about 114 U.S. Capitol Police (Capitol Police) officers who reported injuries, and caused about \$1.5 million in damages, according to information from the Department of Justice and Capitol Police. While there have been specific, violent incidents at the Capitol complex in the past, the size and nature of the January 6 attack was unprecedented.<sup>2</sup>

The Capitol Police is the federal department responsible for protecting the Congress, as well as its members, staff, visitors, and facilities so that it can fulfill its constitutional and legislative responsibilities in a safe, secure, and open environment. Since the attack, some Members of Congress have questioned whether Capitol Police leadership sufficiently prepared its officers to use force and maintain crowd control for large-scale

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<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this report, “Capitol complex” refers to any buildings, grounds, parks, and areas designated under the protection of Capitol Police jurisdiction, including the Capitol Building, grounds surrounding the Capitol Building, Capitol Visitor Center, and congressional offices for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

<sup>2</sup>The Capitol Police estimated that over 10,000 individuals were on Capitol grounds on January 6, 2021. Prior violent incidents at the Capitol complex generally included, for example, incidents conducted by a single individual or smaller groups, or resulted in fewer deaths, injuries, or damages than the January 6 attack.

demonstrations, including scenarios such as what occurred on January 6, 2021.<sup>3</sup>

Use of force is defined as actions taken by an officer that appear reasonably necessary to gain control of a subject. For example, during the January 6 attack, Capitol Police officers used various kinds of force to help protect Members of Congress; the Capitol Building; and fellow officers, including verbal directions, physical force, less-lethal force (e.g., batons and chemical spray), and lethal force (e.g., withdrawal or firing of a firearm).

Crowd control tactics are the strategies that are employed in the event a crowd becomes involved in violent or otherwise destructive behavior, and includes crowd containment, dispersal equipment and tactics, and preparations for multiple arrests. For example, during the January 6 attack, Capitol Police officers used various kinds of crowd control tactics, such as forming police lines to contain the crowd.

Officer preparation to use force and apply crowd control tactics is achieved by various elements, including policy, procedures, training, and equipment. Officer preparation is one of several factors that affected the Capitol Police's ability to respond to the January 6 attack, alongside physical security measures and information sharing prior to the attack.

We were asked to provide a broad and comprehensive overview of events leading up to, during, and following the January 6 attack. In response, we are issuing a series of reports examining the preparation, intelligence gathering, coordination, and response related to the January

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<sup>3</sup>"Large-scale demonstration" refers to the kind of large demonstrations, rallies, and protests that might typically occur on Capitol complex grounds in terms of the size, behavior, and general nature of the crowd. Such demonstrations may be largely peaceful but have the potential for violence. According to Capitol Police officials, there is no set crowd size for what would be considered a large-scale demonstration, and that varying crowd sizes could be considered large scale based on the location and other factors. Such demonstrations may or may not be permitted by any government entity. According to Capitol Police officials, there were 104 large-scale demonstrations at the Capitol complex with more than 1,000 demonstrators from January 5, 2017, through January 5, 2021, such as recurring marches (e.g., Women's March and March for Life), confirmation hearings, and rallies for various interest groups and causes.

6, 2021 attack. This fourth report is focused on Capitol Police officer preparation, specifically: <sup>4</sup>

1. How the Capitol Police prepared officers prior to the January 6 attack to use force and maintain crowd control during large-scale demonstrations;
2. Capitol Police officers' reported use of force during the January 6 attack;
3. Perspectives of 315 Capitol Police officers who responded to our survey regarding their preparedness for events that took place during the January 6 attack; and
4. Changes the Capitol Police has made to better prepare officers going forward and additional opportunities for improvement.

To conduct our work, we reviewed Capitol Police use of force and crowd control policies, procedures, and training materials. We also analyzed officer use of force reports for January 6, 2021, which describe the types of force used, as well as supervisors' determinations on whether the force was justified.

We conducted an electronic survey of Capitol Police officers who were on duty at the Capitol complex at any point on January 6. We used the survey to obtain officers' perspectives on training, policy, and guidance for use of force and crowd control, as well as to collect suggestions officers had to improve their ability to respond to future events similar to the January 6 attack. We deployed the survey from June through September 2021. We received a response rate of approximately 20 percent, which included responses from 315 of the 1,782 officers we surveyed who were still working at the department at the time of our survey.<sup>5</sup> The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol

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<sup>4</sup>We have issued three prior reports on the January 6 attack. See GAO, *Capitol Attack: Special Event Designations Could Have Been Requested for January 6, 2021, but Not All DHS Guidance Is Clear*, [GAO-21-105255](#) (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 9, 2021); and *Capitol Attack: The Capitol Police Need Clearer Emergency Procedures and a Comprehensive Security Risk Assessment Process*, [GAO-22-105001](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 17, 2022). We also issued a sensitive report, see *Capitol Attack: Federal Agencies' Use of Open Source Data and Related Threat Products Prior to January 6, 2021*, [GAO-22-105256SU](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 16, 2022).

<sup>5</sup>Our response rate of approximately 20 percent is calculated out of the 1,782 officers who were still working at the department at the time of our survey, which also includes officers who were not on duty on January 6, 2021. See appendix I for more information on how we calculated our response rate. According to Capitol Police payroll data and information, 1,482 officers were on duty at the Capitol complex at some point on January 6, 2021.

Police officers who were on duty that day; however, the experiences and perspectives of the officers who were on duty that day and chose to respond to our survey provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack.

To help characterize respondent data in this report, we use modifiers (e.g., “most” and “several”) to quantify the views of the 315 officers who completed our survey and reported being on duty on January 6, 2021. We define these modifiers as follows: (1) “most” officers represents at least 158 officers (which is more than 50 percent of the respondents); (2) “many” officers represents 63 to 157 officers (which is more than approximately 20 percent of respondents); (3) “some” officers represents 32 to 62 officers (which is more than approximately 10 percent of respondents); and (4) “several” officers represents at least three to 31 officers. However, in many places throughout the report, we provide the specific number of respondents.

We also conducted a site visit to the Capitol Building in July 2021 to observe Capitol Police operations and reviewed videos from Capitol Police cameras recorded on January 6, 2021. Further, we interviewed Capitol Police officials on various topics, including how the department trains its officers and actions the department has taken to better prepare its officers following the January 6 attack. For more information on our scope and methodology, see appendixes I and II.

We conducted this performance audit from February 2021 to March 2022 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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## Background

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### Capitol Police Organization

The Capitol Police is responsible for securing the 276-acre Capitol complex, including protecting Members of Congress, congressional facilities, national treasures, and visitors from threats of disruption and

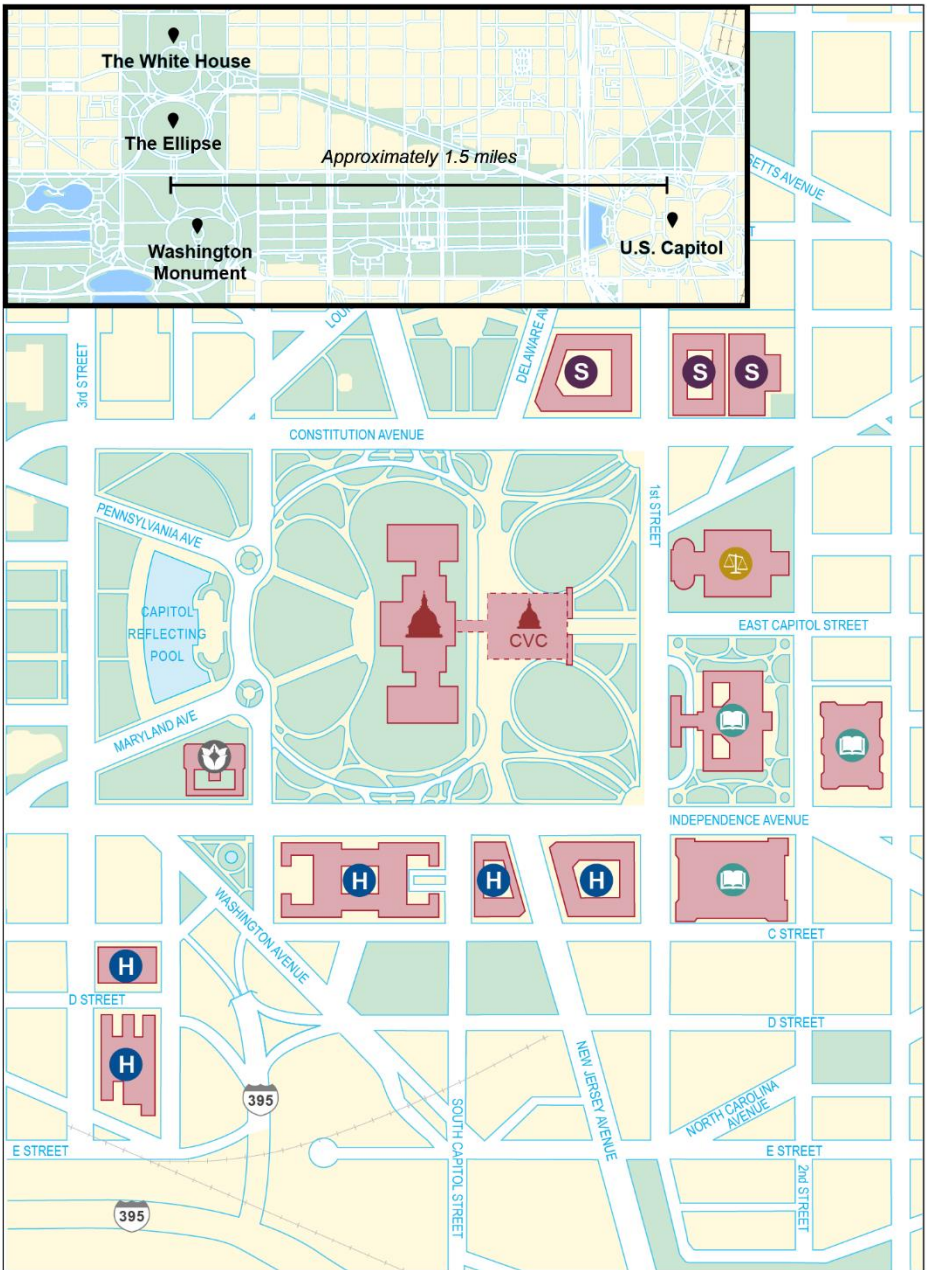
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crime.<sup>6</sup> As figure 1 illustrates, the Capitol complex includes office buildings, the Library of Congress, the Supreme Court, and other grounds.

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<sup>6</sup>The Capitol Police has certain limited arrest authorities that extend beyond the area of the Capitol complex, as well as authority, subject to the direction of the Capitol Police Board, to provide protection in any area of the United States to Members of Congress, officers of Congress, and any member of the immediate family of any such member or officer, if the Capitol Police Board determines such protection to be necessary. 2 U.S.C. § 1966. The Supreme Court, while within the confines of the Capitol complex, is protected by its own police force.

Figure 1: U.S. Capitol Complex



Sources: National Park Service and GAO; GAO (photos). | GAO-22-104829



Capitol West side



Capitol East side

Legend

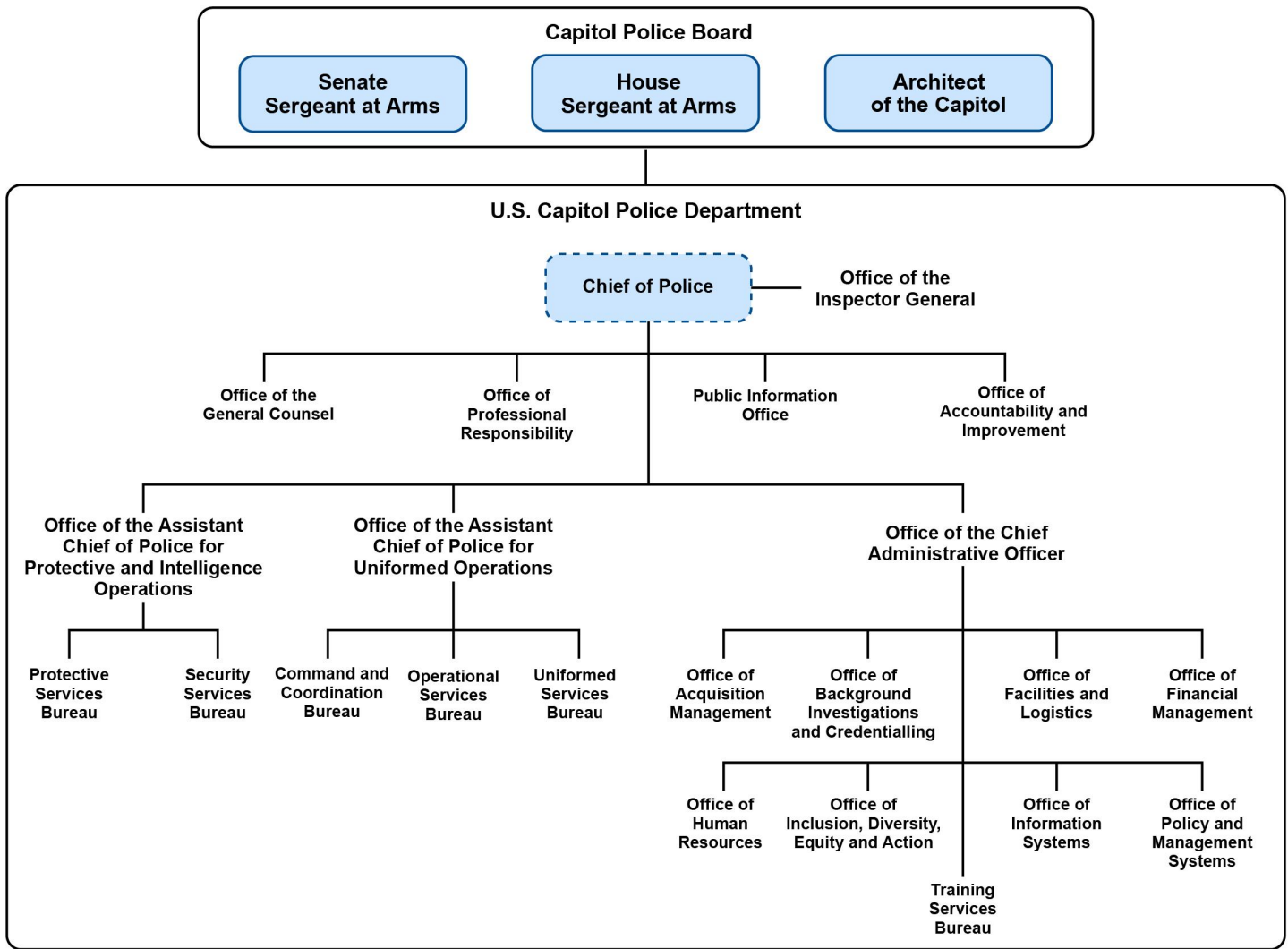
-  U.S. Capitol
-  Capitol Visitor Center
-  House office buildings
-  Senate office buildings
-  Library of Congress
-  U.S. Supreme Court
-  Other buildings
-  U.S. Botanic Garden





The Capitol Police's organizational structure includes security, protection, and administration responsibilities (see fig. 2). The Capitol Police Board,

which we discuss later in this report, is charged with overseeing and supporting the Capitol Police.

Figure 2: U.S. Capitol Police Organization Structure



Legend

-  Voting members of Capitol Police Board
-  Nonvoting member of Capitol Police Board

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Capitol Police information. | GAO-22-104829

Within the Capitol Police, the Uniformed Services Bureau is responsible for providing police services and security for the Capitol complex.<sup>7</sup> According to the Capitol Police, the Uniformed Service Bureau is the most visible element of the department, and its primary mission is to screen visitors to the Capitol complex, suppress crime, and enhance relations with the community and its citizens. In addition, the Operational Services Bureau provides specialized and emergency response to support the department's operational needs, such as through its Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) and its tactical team, the Containment and Emergency Response Team (CERT).<sup>8</sup>

**CDU.** The CDU is responsible for crowd control within the Capitol Police. The CDU is an ad hoc collateral duty unit within the Operational Services Bureau's Special Operations Division. The CDU's mission is to ensure that the legislative functions of Congress are not disrupted by civil unrest or protest activity, while respecting the civil rights of all citizens. Members of the CDU may normally be assigned to either the Uniformed Services Bureau or the Operational Services Bureau. The CDU outfits some officers with "hard gear," which includes tactical helmets, body armor, shields, and a long baton. It outfits other CDU officers with "soft gear," which does not include helmets and body armor. On January 6, 2021, there were approximately 276 officers (all seven platoons) assigned to the CDU.

According to Capitol Police officials, the department activates CDU when any one of the following conditions emerge in association with a group intending to demonstrate at the Capitol complex:

- the group intends (on the basis of analyses or as suggested by intelligence) to engage in civil disobedience by (1) blocking entrances to buildings or offices; (2) protesting inside of buildings; (3) blocking or impeding roadways or sidewalks; or (4) demonstrating in an unpermitted area;
- the group is known to cause civil disorder, looting, violent acts toward others, or has been subjected to violent attacks from counter groups;

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<sup>7</sup>According to Capitol Police officials, as of October 2021, about 60 percent (1,108 of 1,843) of the department's officers were assigned to the Uniformed Services Bureau; about 11 percent (206 of 1,843) were assigned to the Operational Services Bureau; and 29 percent (529 of 1,843) were assigned to other bureaus or divisions.

<sup>8</sup>The Operational Services Bureau also includes the canine team; Hazardous Materials Response Team; and Hazardous Devices Section, among other assets.



- the group will have a large number of participants;
- the group will likely draw groups in counter protest; or
- intelligence gathered by the department points to the potential for the group to violate its issued permit.

**CERT.** CERT is the full-time tactical team within the Capitol Police’s Special Operations Division. The team provides response for situations requiring special weapons and tactics needed to respond quickly to any threat to the Capitol complex, such as barricaded suspects, hostage rescues, and active shooter situations. The team also serves as a “mobile response” team (i.e., capable of responding to a given situation, if needed) at all times while Congress is in session or as a “ready response” team (i.e., strategically placed prior to the event) during congressional votes. According to the Capitol Police, all members of CERT (27 officers) were present on January 6, 2021.

**Capitol Police Board.** The Capitol Police carries out its responsibilities in coordination with the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms under the direction and authorization of the Capitol Police Board.<sup>9</sup> The House and Senate Sergeants at Arms are charged with maintaining order in their respective chambers, and each official performs a number of law enforcement, security-related, decorum, and protocol duties. The Capitol Police Board directs the Capitol Police to enforce law in the Capitol buildings and grounds and may authorize the Capitol Police to protect Members of Congress in any area of the United States. The board oversees the Capitol Police and is comprised, in total, of four voting and nonvoting members. The three voting members are the Senate Sergeant at Arms, House Sergeant at Arms, and Architect of the Capitol.<sup>10</sup> The one

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<sup>9</sup>The Capitol Police Board has an executive assistant. The function of this position is to serve as a central point for communication and to enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the board’s administration activities.

<sup>10</sup>The Architect of the Capitol manages the office responsible for the operations and care of Capitol complex facilities, including implementing security projects. Among the officials under the Architect is the Chief Security Officer, who coordinates interagency emergency preparedness and supports the Capitol Police in its mission to protect the congressional community and its visitors.

nonvoting member is the Chief of the Capitol Police, who is appointed by the three voting members.<sup>11</sup>

The Capitol Police Board has varied and wide-ranging oversight roles and responsibilities, per statute.<sup>12</sup> The board's responsibilities include managing human capital, as well as ensuring security, such as designing, installing, and maintaining security systems for the Capitol buildings.<sup>13</sup> For example, in certain cases, the Capitol Police Chief must submit a request for outside assistance to the board for approval.<sup>14</sup>

In prior work we issued in February 2017, we identified approaches to help enhance accountability, transparency, and effective external communication of the Capitol Police Board.<sup>15</sup> To address our recommendation that the board incorporate leading practices for internal control and governance standards into its manual of procedures, the Capitol Police Board updated its manual in December 2021. In January 2022, we requested additional information from the board, such as information on how the board solicited and addressed feedback from congressional stakeholders when updating the manual. Once we have received this information, we will evaluate it to determine the extent to which the board has addressed our recommendation.

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<sup>11</sup>Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003, Pub. L. No. 108-7, div. H, § 1014(a)(2), 117 Stat. 11, 361.

<sup>12</sup>See 2 U.S.C. ch. 29.

<sup>13</sup>2 U.S.C. §§ 1964(b), 1965(a).

<sup>14</sup>In December 2021, section 2 of the Capitol Police Emergency Assistance Act of 2021, Pub. L. No. 117-77, § 2, 135 Stat. 1522, 1522-23 (2021), amended 2 U.S.C. § 1970 to authorize the Chief of the Capitol Police to request such assistance in an emergency if the Chief of the Capitol Police determines that the provision of assistance is necessary to prevent the significant disruption of governmental function and public order within the United States Capitol Buildings and Grounds. Prior to amendment, only the Capitol Police Board and the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms were authorized to make a request for assistance in an emergency under section 1970. For more information, see [GAO-22-105001](#).

<sup>15</sup>GAO, *Capitol Police Board: Fully Incorporating Leading Governance Practices Would Help Enhance Accountability, Transparency, and External Communication*, [GAO-17-112](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 7, 2017); and *Capitol Police: Applying Effective Practices to Address Recommendations Will Improve Oversight and Management*, [GAO-21-105288](#) (Washington, D.C.: June 15, 2021).

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## January 6 Attack

As we have previously reported, in the months leading up to the January 6 attack on the Capitol, there were reported efforts to organize large groups of demonstrators to travel to Washington, D.C. to dispute the outcome of the 2020 presidential election.<sup>16</sup> In these prior reports, we have discussed the efforts of the Capitol Police and other agencies to prepare for anticipated demonstrations related to the counting of the Electoral College ballots during the joint session of Congress that day.

According to Capitol Police payroll data and information, there were 1,840 Capitol Police officers on the force as of January 6, 2021.<sup>17</sup> Of these, approximately 81 percent (1,482) of officers were on duty at the Capitol complex at some point that day.<sup>18</sup> More than half of these officers on duty (over 900) were assigned to the Uniformed Services Bureau in the normal course of their duties related to protecting the Capitol complex. Further, all seven CDU platoons (approximately 276 officers), as well as all members of CERT (27 officers), were present on January 6, 2021.<sup>19</sup>

According to the CDU's operational plan for January 6, 2021, the CDU's mission that day was to provide an environment in which lawful First Amendment activity could be safely demonstrated; prevent any adverse impact to the legislative process; mitigate and respond to civil disorder

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<sup>16</sup>See [GAO-21-105255](#) and [GAO-22-105001](#)

<sup>17</sup>As previously noted, we sent our survey to 1,782 officers who were still working at the department at the time we deployed our survey. We did not send our survey to officers who had left the department (e.g., retired or resigned) after the January 6 attack or were on long-term medical leave at the time we deployed our survey.

<sup>18</sup>This number includes officers who worked at any point on January 6, 2021, including officers who may have completed their shifts prior to the start of the attack and those who may have started their shift after the attack. This number also includes officers who may have been working at other locations on the Capitol complex, such as those working for the Inauguration Task Force or who worked in the Capitol Police gun range. This number excludes civilian employees, as well as officers who were on leave (e.g., personal leave, sick leave, and extended medical leave).

<sup>19</sup>According to Capitol Police officials, the department had only activated four of the seven CDU platoons in response to prior demonstrations in 2020.

and crime; and prevent property damage.<sup>20</sup> CDU strategies planned for that day included monitoring demonstration and protest activity and providing timely response to address and mitigate any threats posed. About 160 CDU officers were assigned to work as part of the hard gear platoons, and approximately 116 CDU officers were in soft gear. According to Capitol Police officials, CERT was expected to provide countersniper operations by monitoring crowds to identify and neutralize potential snipers.

In addition to the Uniformed Services Bureau officers, CDU platoons, and CERT team members, the Capitol Police deployed other specialty units on January 6, such as

- explosives detection canine teams;
- the Hazardous Devices Section, to respond to potential chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives threats;
- the Hazardous Materials Response Team, to respond to bomb threats;
- counterintelligence officers, to observe the crowd at the Ellipse (the location of a National Park Service-permitted rally near the White House that was expecting an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 people to participate) and other locations; and
- Dignitary Protection Division officer details, to protect congressional leadership and Members, including on the House and Senate floors, as well as at the Ellipse in the event of a threat to Members participating in the rally at that location.

At 2:00 PM Eastern Standard Time on January 6, there were 1,214 of the department's 1,840 officers (or 66 percent) reportedly on site, as some officers had completed their shifts prior to the onset of the attack and had left the Capitol complex. According to Capitol Police officials, the department adjusted its operations (e.g., adjusted start times) for January 6, to ensure that all available officers would work either the midnight shift or during the joint session and planned demonstrations. The officials

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<sup>20</sup>The Office of Inspector General for the Capitol Police reported in February 2021 that the Capitol Police did not prepare a comprehensive, department-wide operational plan for demonstrations planned for January 6, 2021, and lacked adequate guidance for operational planning. See U. S. Capitol Police, Office of Inspector General, *Review of the Events Surrounding the January 6, 2021, Takeover of the U.S. Capitol, Flash Report: Operational Planning and Intelligence*, Investigative Number 2021-I-0003- A (Washington, D.C.: February 2021).

added that at the start of the attack, the department had substantially more officers on site than for prior demonstrations in 2020, including those during the summer, as well as in November and December 2020.<sup>21</sup> According to Capitol Police officials in January 2022, the department had more officers on site on January 6, 2021, compared to the prior demonstrations for several reasons, including that Congress was in full session and that intelligence did not advise that Congress would be the target for the prior demonstrations.

We have previously reported on Capitol Police's physical security planning efforts leading up to January 6, 2021 and how the Capitol Police responded to the January 6, 2021 events, including the processes for obtaining support from other agencies.<sup>22</sup> Figure 3 shows the growing crowd that began arriving at the Capitol complex on January 6, 2021.

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<sup>21</sup>While some officers had left the Capitol complex at the end of their midnight shift on the morning of January 6 or were not assigned to the event that day, several officers told us in our survey that they came to the Capitol to provide assistance when they learned of the attack. Using our methodology, we could not determine the total number of officers who returned.

<sup>22</sup>[GAO-22-105001](#)

**Figure 3: Capitol Complex and National Mall from the Western Side of the Capitol Dome on January 6, 2021**

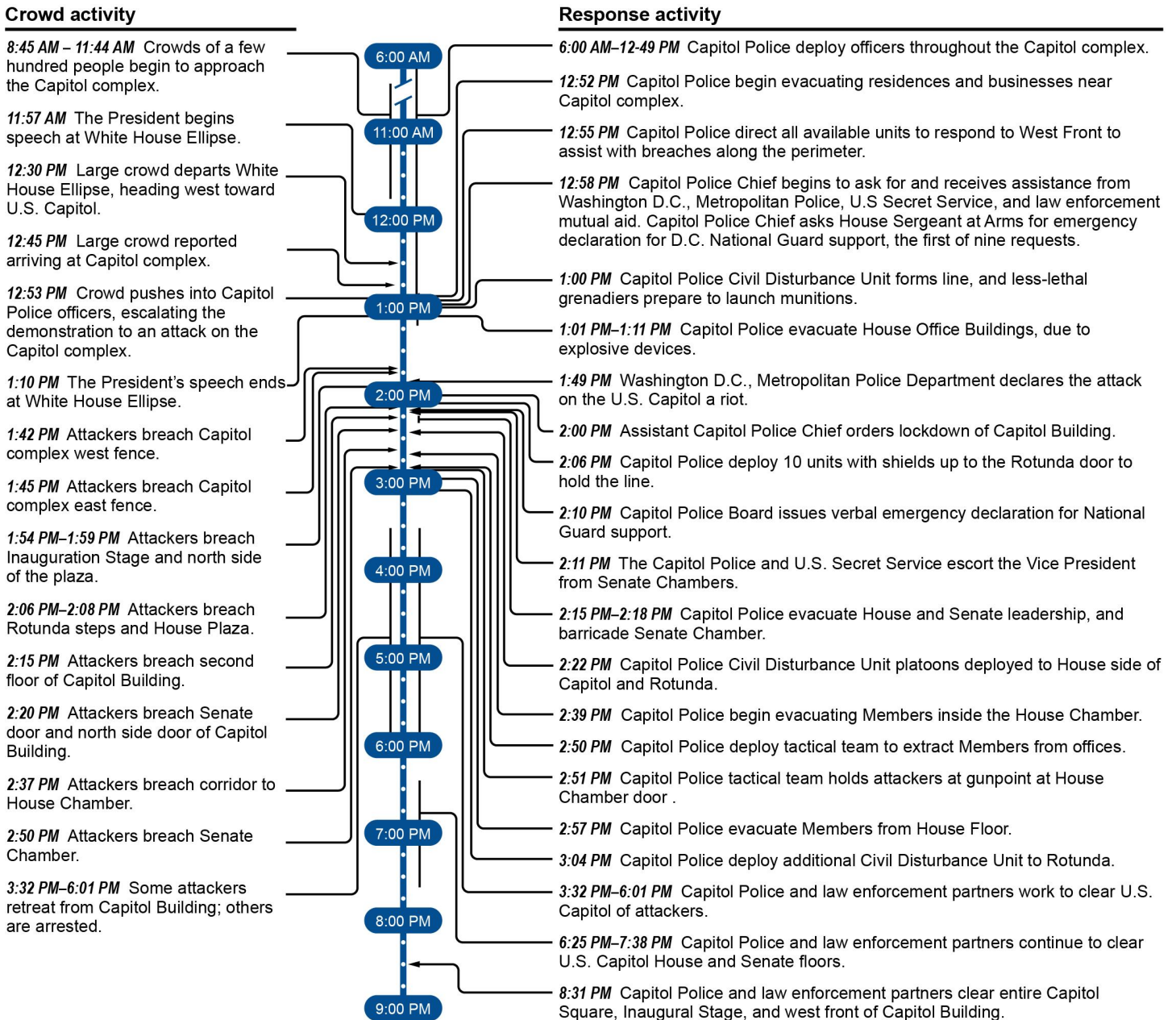


Source: U.S. Capitol Police. | GAO-22-104829

Note: All times are approximate and in Eastern Standard Time.

Figure 4 illustrates some of the key actions that occurred that day.

**Figure 4: Examples of Key Actions Performed by the U.S. Capitol Police in Responding to Crowd Activity on January 6, 2021**



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Capitol Police information. | GAO-22-104829

Note: All times are in Eastern Standard Time.

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## The Capitol Police Had Policies and Training for Use of Force and Crowd Control

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### The Capitol Police Established Use of Force and Crowd Control Policies Before the January 6 Attack

Prior to the January 6 attack, the Capitol Police had established department-wide use of force and crowd control policies.

#### Use of Force Policy

In October 2016, the Capitol Police updated the department's use of force policy.<sup>23</sup> The policy states that officers are only authorized to use the level of force that appears reasonably necessary to bring a subject under control while protecting the lives of officers and others. Additionally, officers are expected to evaluate and respond to situations based on the totality of circumstances that can include the number of people the officer must contend with; the size, age, and condition of both the officer and suspect; the presence of bystanders; and the availability of weapons. Capitol Police officials stated in April 2021 that the policy is applicable to all situations and does not change based on the mission or assignment.

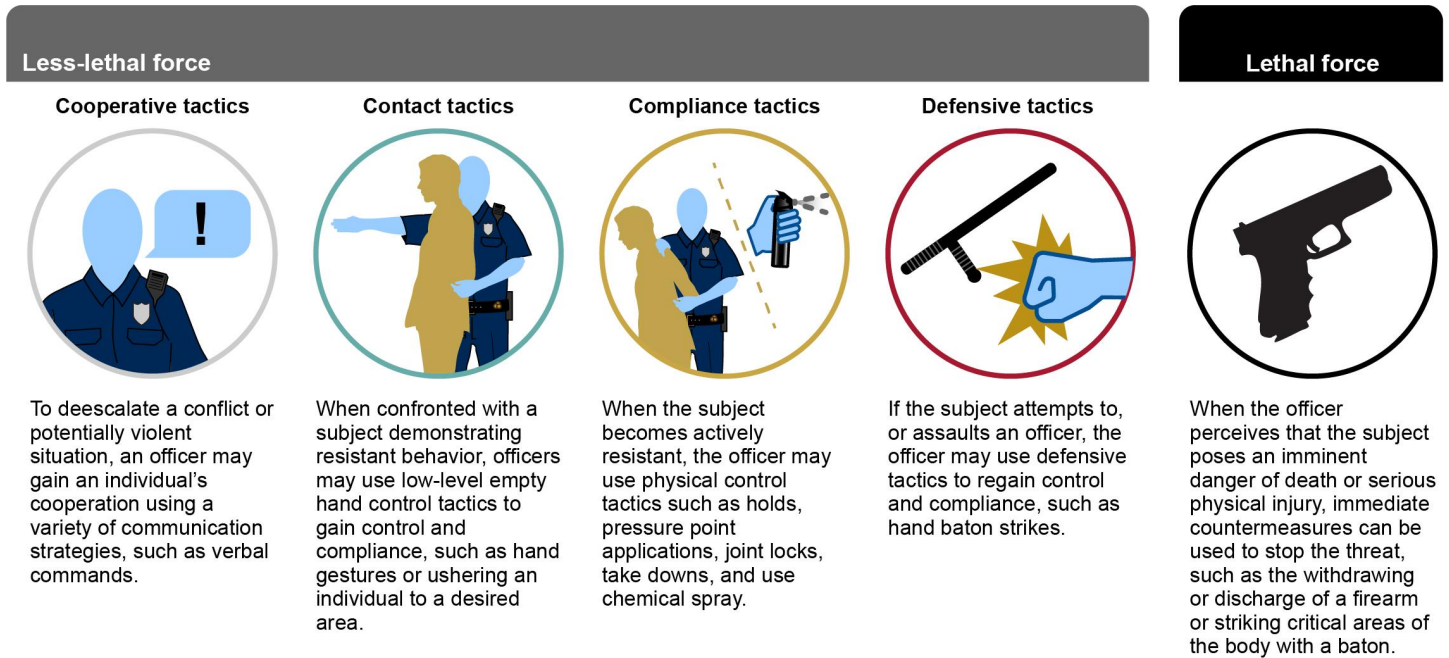
The policy categorizes use of force into five levels that officers may apply. Four of the categories are recognized as less-lethal (i.e., any force that is not intended to cause death or serious physical injury). As shown in figure 5, less-lethal force includes—on a scale from least to greatest force—cooperative, contact, compliance, and defensive tactics. The final level is lethal force.

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<sup>23</sup>Capitol Police, Training Services Bureau, *Directive 1020.004 Use of Force* (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 26, 2016).



Figure 5: U.S. Capitol Police Categories of Use of Force



Sources: GAO analysis of agency policies; Art Explosion (clip art). | GAO-21-104829

**Less-lethal force.** Less-lethal force devices available to all Capitol Police officers include impact weapons (e.g., batons) and chemical spray (e.g., pepper spray).<sup>24</sup> Capitol Police policy outlines guidance on situational tactics and use of force restrictions for less-lethal devices. For example, officers in situations requiring less-lethal force should avoid intentional strikes with batons or physical tactics to critical areas, such as the head, kidney area, and groin. In special circumstances, officers are authorized to use other equipment as an instrument of force even though the item is not designated for that purpose. For example, a flashlight can be used as a defensive weapon as long as it is used in accordance with established impact weapon training.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, all officers should attempt to warn

<sup>24</sup>Batons are impact weapons used as a compliance or defensive tool that are most often made out of plastic or metal and are available in a variety of lengths. Chemical spray includes devices designed to incapacitate or disable a person by spraying a chemical irritant, such as oleoresin capsicum, into their face, causing irritation to the eyes, upper respiratory tract, and skin.

<sup>25</sup>On January 6, 2021, the Capitol Police had not equipped its officers with electronic control devices (e.g., stun guns). According to Capitol Police officials, the department had recently begun to issue electronic control devices to officers in October 2021.

the subject of their intent to use chemical spray, whenever practical. Further, some officers assigned to CDU and CERT are authorized to use additional types of less-lethal force, such as chemical munitions (e.g., tear gas), kinetic impact munitions (e.g., bean bag rounds), and diversionary devices (e.g., flash bangs).<sup>26</sup>

**Lethal force.** Capitol Police policy defines lethal force as force that is likely to cause death or serious physical injury. All officers are issued a service firearm. Lethal force also includes the withdrawal of a firearm from its holster when preparing for its lawful discharge and the intentional discharge of a firearm. It also includes the use of impact weapons (e.g., batons) to strike critical areas of a subject's body, such as the head. All officers are authorized, when warranted, to apply lethal force after they receive training and meet qualification requirements. The policy states that lethal force can only be used under the following two circumstances:

- to defend human life, including the officer's own life, or in defense of any person in imminent danger of serious physical injury; or
- to apprehend or prevent the escape of a fleeing subject under certain conditions (e.g., the officer reasonably believes that the person to be apprehended poses an imminent threat of death or serious physical injury to the officer or others if apprehension is delayed).

### Crowd Control Policies

The Capitol Police has policies and procedures for crowd control on the Capitol complex, which the department updated in May 2012, April 2018, and October 2018. Such policies and procedures address how officers are expected to (1) respond to both approved and nonapproved demonstrations occurring on the Capitol complex, (2) activate the Incident

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<sup>26</sup>Chemical munitions are projectiles, canisters, or grenades that contain a compound that causes discomfort or incapacitation, such as oleoresin capsicum or pelargonic acid vanillylamide. Kinetic impact munitions are projectiles, canisters, or grenades designed to incapacitate an individual by directly hitting them with the munition. Such munitions may be composed of rubber, plastic, foam, sponge, paint, or bean bag. Some munitions can have properties of both chemical and kinetic impact munitions. Diversionary devices create a bright flash and loud noise designed to temporarily divert the attention of people in the vicinity. Such devices are either thrown or launched from a less-lethal launcher.

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Command System, and (3) secure the Capitol complex during active threats.<sup>27</sup>

**Approved and nonapproved demonstrations.** Capitol Police policy for responding to demonstrations states that the department will ensure that demonstrations on the Capitol complex are carried out pursuant to the terms of a valid permit. In the event that a nonpermitted group of 20 or more people fails to comply with officer commands, the officer should tell the group to apply for a permit or contact their supervisor to resolve the situation.<sup>28</sup> Further, Capitol Police procedures address how officers are expected to maintain the orderly movement of pedestrians, vehicles, and other traffic on Capitol grounds; respond to security breaches; and use of less-lethal devices (e.g., compressed air launchers to deploy chemical and kinetic impact munitions) to de-escalate a dangerous or potentially dangerous situation.<sup>29</sup> All officers are expected to request a supervisor to their location if they are unable to secure compliance with demonstrators (permitted or nonpermitted).

**Incident Command System.** Capitol Police policy states that a qualified employee is expected to activate the department's Incident Command System—the Capitol Police's primary management framework for emergency response, major event management, and disaster mitigation—if additional coordination to address the threat is necessary.<sup>30</sup> The system aims to provide the department with command, control, and coordination functions to stabilize an incident. According to Capitol Police policy, the system can be applicable both to incidents that are relatively small and isolated, as well as large and complex incidents.

Per the policy, the first qualified employee (i.e., an officer or operational civilian) arriving on the scene is responsible for initiating Incident Command System procedures. This is accomplished by developing

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<sup>27</sup>These topics are not mutually exclusive. For example, a demonstration can lead to the activation of the Incident Command System.

<sup>28</sup>The events of January 6 included a non-permitted protest at the U.S. Capitol and a permitted rally (through the National Park Service) at the Ellipse. For more information, see [GAO-21-105255](#).

<sup>29</sup>Capitol Police, Chief of Operations, *SOP AC-000-39: Demonstration Activities, Application, Interpretation, and Enforcement* (Washington D.C.: May 28, 2012); *AC-000-17 Security Breaches* (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 18, 2019); and Operational Services Bureau, *OS-140-02 Use of PepperBall System* (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 30, 2019).

<sup>30</sup>Capitol Police, Command and Coordination Bureau, *Directive 1052.003: Incident Command System* (Washington D.C.: Oct. 16, 2018).

incident objectives; establishing a command post; notifying the Capitol Police’s communication office of any potential hazards or resources needs; and initiating action to address the threat or incident, among other actions. When there is more than one agency with incident jurisdiction or when an incident crosses jurisdictions, the Capitol Police may participate in a unified command structure in which the agencies work together to establish a common set of objectives and strategies. When the system is activated, the designated Capitol Police Commander will remain in command until relieved, or the incident has terminated.

Capitol Police officials stated in October 2021 that the Incident Command System is a framework that should be followed during all major incidents, and that while it was used during the January 6 attack, it faced some challenges due to the chaotic nature of the attack, as discussed in this report.<sup>31</sup>

**Active threats.** The Capitol Police has policies and procedures that officers are to follow to secure the Capitol complex during active threats. Capitol Police policy defines an “active threat” as any incident or situation that poses significant and immediate risk to individuals or buildings within the Capitol complex (e.g., active shooter, suicide bomber, chemical or biological release, and vehicle-ramming). Accordingly, such threats may relate to a demonstration or an attempt to breach the Capitol Building. Officers are expected to respond immediately to mitigate the threat if the life or safety of others are jeopardized or when actions by a perpetrator will cause significant damage. Under these scenarios, officers are expected, for example, to secure their assigned area and make any arrests necessary. Further, officers must maintain communication with and follow the direction of the Incident Command System during the active threat.

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## The Capitol Police Trains All Officers on Use of Force and Crowd Control

The Capitol Police provides all officers with training at various times on use of force and crowd control. Moreover, it requires officers to successfully qualify with each less-lethal and lethal device before they are

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<sup>31</sup>For more information on command and control challenges faced that day, see U.S. Capitol Police, Office of the Inspector General, *Review of the Events Surrounding the January 6, 2021, Takeover of the U.S. Capitol Flash Report: Command and Coordination Bureau*, Investigative Number 2021-I-0003-E (Washington, D.C.: July 2021).

authorized to carry them on the Capitol complex. The Capitol Police sends its newly hired officers to the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) located in Glynco, Georgia, to receive initial training. The department provides additional training on use of force and crowd control at the Capitol Police Academy in Cheltenham, Maryland, after officers have graduated from FLETC.

### FLETC

Capitol Police officers receive initial training from FLETC's Uniformed Police Training Program, which lasts about 12 weeks. The training program is designed to provide the new officer with the specific knowledge and skills needed to perform at the entry level in a federal law enforcement position. Training on use of force, which is one part of the curriculum, is delivered through a mixture of lectures on historical precedent, tactical strategy, and application of use of force practices under various scenarios. Training also provides officers the opportunity to demonstrate competency through hands-on application. Specifically, officers are required to demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the use of force through written testing and physical demonstration. Hands-on use of force scenarios include handcuffing or escorting a suspect, using a baton, and using chemical spray (see fig. 6). Courses are broken up over multiple days during the 12 weeks and can range from 2 to 16 hours per course, depending on the materials being covered.

**Figure 6: Trainees at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers**



An officer is receiving training on using a baton.



An officer is receiving training on deployment of chemical spray.

Source: Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers. | GAO-22-104829

Additionally, officers receive training in crowd control tactics during the 12-week program. Crowd control training instructs officers on the characteristics of demonstrations, potential crowd control gear, and decontamination protocols if chemical agents are deployed. The training does not specifically cover large demonstrations, such as the size of the crowd for the January 6 attack. According to FLETC officials, the centers' crowd control training is applicable to all situations, regardless of the number of demonstrators.

### Capitol Police-Provided Training for All Officers

After FLETC, all officers receive training from the Capitol Police throughout their careers, including at the Capitol Police Academy, on-the-job training, and training to meet recurring requalification requirements.

**Capitol Police Academy.** Immediately after graduation from FLETC, officers complete 14 weeks of additional training at the Capitol Police Academy. The academy tailors the training for law enforcement to the Capitol complex. Capitol Police officials stated that the department provides both classroom and scenario-based training with role-playing sessions. The academy's scenario-based training relevant to demonstrations covers small groups, such as a small disturbance in a hearing room or in public areas of the Capitol complex.<sup>32</sup> According to Capitol Police officials, the academy's use of force training is tailored to reinforce Capitol Police policy and the officers' assigned role within the department.<sup>33</sup> Officers are also trained on the proper handling and use of batons and chemical spray.

**On-the-job training.** After new officers complete academy training, the department pairs the officers with a police training officer for 8 weeks of on-the-job training. Police training officers are experienced Capitol Police officers who observe and evaluate new officers while on duty. The training officers check for good judgment and understanding of policies, especially in any scenario where they use force or arrest a suspect.

**Requalification requirements.** Beyond the training for newly hired officers, the Capitol Police has requalification requirements for some types of less-lethal and lethal devices. Such training involves classroom

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<sup>32</sup>CDU conducts training for all Capitol Police officers on larger-size groups, which we discuss later in this report.

<sup>33</sup>The department may assign officers to various roles across different units.

lectures and demonstrations of proper techniques. Regarding less-lethal devices, officers who were trained on less-lethal launchers, hand thrown munitions, or diversionary devices must requalify annually. Capitol Police officials stated that while the department does not require annual requalification training for use of chemical spray and the baton, it tries to provide refresher training on these devices to officers every 3 to 5 years.<sup>34</sup> For lethal force, the department trains and equips all officers on their use of handguns and requires that they requalify biannually.<sup>35</sup> In addition to showing proficiency on a firing range, an officer takes training that includes an online refresher component on the use of force policy. Prior to the January 6 attack, the department conducted its most recent firearms requalification cycle, which included the use of force refresher, from October through December 2020.

**Crowd control training.** In addition to the initial crowd control training they receive at FLETC, the department's CDU trains all new officers on civil disturbance and crowd control.<sup>36</sup> All officers receive 40 hours of entry-level CDU training after completing their academy training, even if they are not ultimately assigned to the CDU. The training includes general knowledge on the CDU's mission, uniforms, equipment, levels of CDU deployment, and squad formations.<sup>37</sup> For example, instructors use visual aids to illustrate different crowd control formations officers can use to gain control of small-scale demonstrations and have students practice the formations (see fig. 7). According to its Capitol Police officials, the CDU-provided crowd control training does not have a requirement for refresher training for non-CDU officers.

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<sup>34</sup>We did not evaluate the extent to which officers are taking refresher training.

<sup>35</sup>Officers requalify for their assigned weapon twice per year. CERT officers are trained and equipped on other types of firearms, which we discuss later in this report.

<sup>36</sup>Capitol Police officials explained that sometimes this additional training does not occur immediately after the academy if there are not enough new officers to conduct it. In such cases, the Capitol Police waits until there are enough new officers to practice tactical crowd control formations in the training.

<sup>37</sup>The department last updated its civil disturbance unit training lesson plan in January 2016.

Figure 7: Capitol Police Officers Train on Crowd Control Formations and Riot Shield Use



Source: U.S. Capitol Police. | GAO-22-104829

Prior to the January 6 attack, the CDU-provided training did not specifically cover large-scale demonstrations such as what was seen during the January 6 attack, when many demonstrators were noncompliant or violent. According to Capitol Police officials, while the training discusses the possibility for crowds to become violent, it focuses on the types of crowds the Capitol Police typically see at the Capitol complex. Such crowds may be large (e.g., over 1,000 demonstrators) but are generally peaceful, with only a few noncompliant participants. Further, Capitol Police officials stated that the department’s crowd control training teaches tactics it employs regardless of crowd size.

**Other mandatory training.** The Capitol Police requires officers to take other training classes, including annual mandatory online and in-service training. Mandatory online training includes topics such as on-the-job ethics, workplace health and safety, Capitol complex traffic regulations, and responding to committee hearing disruptions. Annual in-service training varies slightly each year and covers a number of topics, including report writing, legal updates, defensive tactics, active shooter response, and first aid.

### The Department Provides Certain Units Specialized Training on Less-Lethal Devices and Crowd Control Tactics

The Capitol Police provides CDU and CERT officers with specialized training based on their operational responsibilities.

**CDU.** The Capitol Police provides CDU officers with additional training beyond the 40-hour crowd control training that the Capitol Police provides



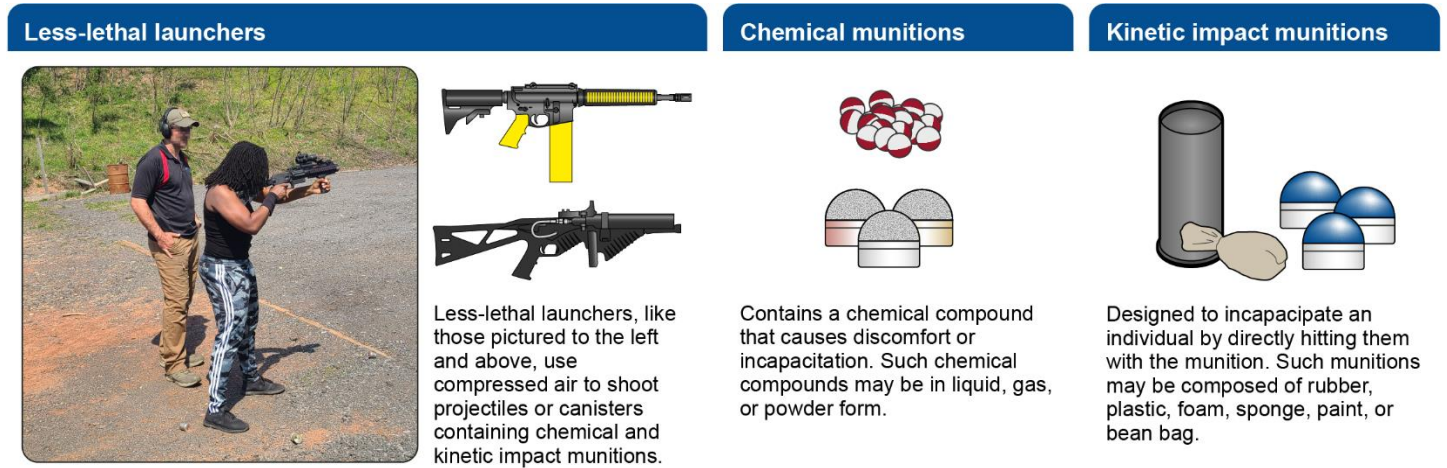
to all new officers when available. This additional training includes refresher training, training for some officers on additional types of less-lethal force, and on-the-job training.<sup>38</sup>

- *Refresher training.* Capitol Police officials stated that they aim to provide nonrequired refresher training to CDU officers once every 3 years; however, they acknowledged that this does not always occur because operational needs prevent them from pulling officers away from their posts to attend training. Further, when CDU officers are pulled for such training, they may or may not be trained with other officers assigned to their platoon.
- *Less-lethal force training.* The department provides some CDU officers with training on additional types of less-lethal force for use during civil disturbances. For example, CDU certifies some individual officers to serve as grenadiers who deploy chemical and kinetic impact munitions using less-lethal launchers (see fig. 8). Capitol Police officials stated that grenadiers requalify annually. According to Capitol Police officials, seven CDU grenadiers were deployed during the January 6 attack.

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<sup>38</sup>The Capitol Police's Office of the Inspector General reported in March 2021 that the Capitol Police's policies and procedures did not adequately define the CDU's responsibilities, duties, composition, equipment, and training. The Office of the Inspector General recommended that the Capitol Police formalize the CDU's training standards, requirements, and responsibilities. See U. S. Capitol Police, Office of the Inspector General, *Review of the Events Surrounding the January 6, 2021, Takeover of the U.S. Capitol Flash Report: Civil Disturbance Unit and Intelligence*, Investigative Number 2021-I-0003-B (Washington D.C.: March 2021).

Figure 8: U.S. Capitol Police Civil Disturbance Unit Officer Training on a Less-Lethal Launcher



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Capitol Police documents. | GAO-22-104829

- On-the-job training.** CDU officers also get on-the-job training through regular deployments. Specifically, Capitol Police officials stated that CDU officers typically deploy at least three or four times per month, during which they practice crowd control tactics in a real-world environment. For example, according to Capitol Police officials, CDU was deployed to some—but not necessarily all—of the 104 large-scale demonstrations at the Capitol complex (both permitted and nonpermitted) with more than 1,000 demonstrators during the 4 years prior to the January 6 attack.<sup>39</sup> Such demonstrations included recurring marches (e.g., Women’s March and March for Life), confirmation hearings, and rallies for various interest groups and causes. Further, the officials added that the department deployed CDU officers almost every day during the summer and fall of 2020 in response to demonstrations related to the death of George Floyd or the presidential election.

**CERT.** The department provides CERT officers with specialized tactical training, as well as less-lethal and lethal force training.

- Tactical training.** CERT officers receive specialized training geared toward tactical response scenarios. Because CERT is not primarily focused on civil disturbances, CERT training focuses on other types of scenarios, such as hostage rescue, responding to an active shooter,

<sup>39</sup>Capitol Police officials stated in July 2021 that they could not determine the number of demonstrations the CDU had been deployed to during this time because the department does not maintain such statistics, in part because some deployments are done with no warning.

and removing barricaded subjects. Additionally, according to Capitol Police officials, CERT officers jointly train with the U.S. Secret Service and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to help prepare for crowd control during Presidential Inaugurations or State of the Union addresses, among other scenarios. However, CERT and CDU did not generally cross-train with each other prior to the January 6 attack.<sup>40</sup> Further, Capitol Police officials stated that CERT does not have any required training on use of force or crowd control beyond the annual in-service online training and initial 40-hour, CDU-provided crowd control training that is offered to all officers.

- *Less-lethal force.* CERT officers receive training on some of the same types of less-lethal force as the CDU, specifically chemical and kinetic impact munitions.<sup>41</sup> According to Capitol Police officials, seven CERT officers were deployed as grenadiers, in addition to the seven CDU grenadiers, during the January 6 attack. In addition to these grenadiers, some CERT officers also train on the use of diversionary devices. The Capitol Police reported that an additional 26 CERT officers were deployed with diversionary devices during the January 6 attack.
- *Lethal force.* In addition to grenadiers, some CERT officers are trained on and equipped with additional types of firearms beyond the standard handgun issued to all officers, such as shotguns, rifles, and submachine guns. According to policy, CERT officers must meet the same biannual firearms requalification requirements for these other types of firearms that all officers must meet for their handguns.

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<sup>40</sup>The Capitol Police Office of the Inspector General also reported in June 2021 that some of the Capitol Police's specialized assets do not regularly train together, which impacted coordination during the attack. The Office of the Inspector General recommended that the Capitol Police develop and implement recurring training between CERT and other elements CERT may deploy to support, such as the CDU. See U.S. Capitol Police, Office of the Inspector General, *Review of the Events Surrounding the January 6, 2021, Takeover of the U.S. Capitol Flash Report: Containment Emergency Response Team and First Responders Unit*, Investigative Number 2021-I-0003-D (Washington D.C.: June 2021). According to Capitol Police officials in October 2021, CDU and CERT had begun to cross-train. Specifically, the officials stated that they have sent some CERT officers to attend CDU training.

<sup>41</sup>The Capitol Police's Office of the Inspector General reported in June 2021 that CERT conducts most of its own training and maintains its own training records. However, some CERT officers did not complete the required qualifications on their assigned weapons. See U. S. Capitol Police, Office of the Inspector General, *Review of the Events Surrounding the January 6, 2021, Takeover of the U.S. Capitol Flash Report: Containment Emergency Response Team and First Responders Unit*, Investigative Number 2021-I-0003-D.

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## Officers Reported Using Various Types of Force during the January 6 Attack

Capitol Police officers reported using various types of force against attackers during the January 6 attack. According to the Capitol Police's use of force reports, 153 Capitol Police officers carried out 293 use of force incidents, including, for example, the use of empty hand control techniques (i.e., using hands without a weapon, like pushing) as well as batons and chemical spray. The use of force reports show that the most prevalent force was empty hand control techniques, according to our analysis of the data.<sup>42</sup> Further, the reports identified the use of physical tactics, less-lethal munitions, withdrawing or pointing a firearm, as well as one discharge of a firearm.

The Capitol Police determined that each of the 293 use of force incidents reported from January 6, 2021 were justified. According to Capitol Police policy, officers are required to complete a use of force report for any incident that meets one or more of three criteria: (1) unintentional firearm discharge; (2) the withdrawal of a weapon from its holster or pointing a weapon, including a firearm, at an individual or animal; or (3) any use of force greater than, and including, empty hand control techniques. Further, its policy requires officers to complete the use of force report, if possible, prior to the end of the officer's tour of duty (i.e., the day of the incident).

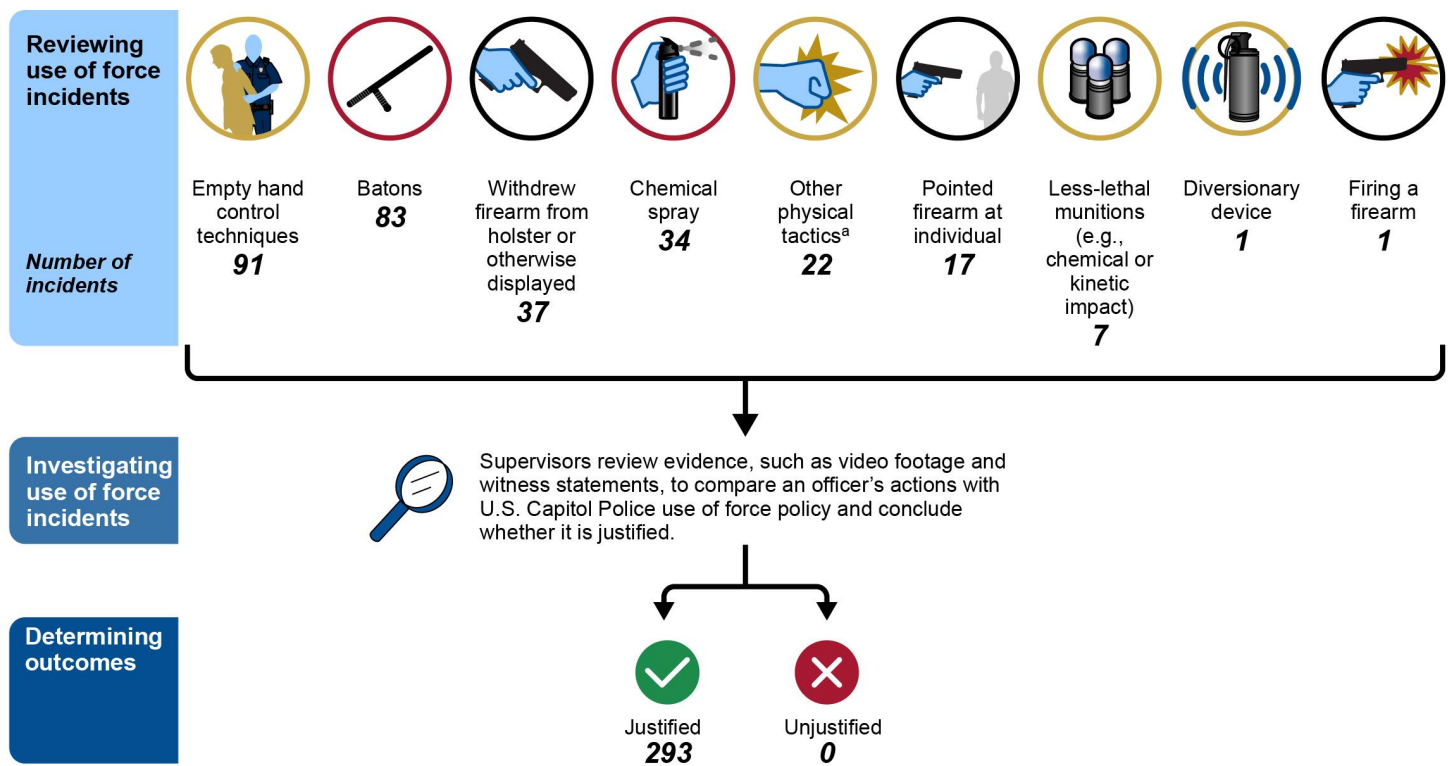
As illustrated below, Capitol Police policy calls for use of force reports to be reviewed by the reporting officer's supervisor for accuracy and completeness (see fig. 9). The supervisor is required to indicate whether the use of force was supported by the circumstances, or whether more investigation is needed. For either designation, the supervisor is to forward the report to the Office of Professional Responsibility for final investigative review. According to the Capitol Police, Office of Professional Responsibility investigations that identify wrongdoing can result in disciplinary actions and criminal investigations. Of the 293 use of

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<sup>42</sup>According to Capitol Police guidance, the use of force reports are required to include actions of the individual that necessitated the use of force; the reasons the officer used force (i.e., the level of force being used against the officer and the imminent potential for death or serious injury); and any complaints of injury or medical treatment received or refused by the individual. The guidance also requires that officers report the use of vehicle barriers (i.e., raising a barrier to prevent a car from entering a restricted location) as a use of force. We did not include such incidents in the scope of our report. See U.S. Capitol Police Directive 1020.004 Use of Force.

force incidents reported, one incident required more investigation by the supervisor. This incident was the sole use of force incident involving the firing of a firearm, which the Capitol Police determined to be justified after additional investigation.<sup>43</sup>

**Figure 9: U.S. Capitol Police Use of Force Reported from January 6, 2021, Investigations, and Outcomes**



Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Capitol Police documents. | GAO-22-104829

Note: We analyzed 162 Capitol Police documents that officers used to report 293 use of force incidents during the January 6 attack. Some officers reported using multiple use of force techniques, such as a combination of empty hand techniques and baton strikes.

<sup>a</sup>Other physical tactics include defensive techniques, striking, and blocks, among others.

Our analysis of the Capitol Police's use of force reports found that officers reported using various types of force during the January 6 attack.

<sup>43</sup>In April 2021, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice announced that they would not pursue criminal charges against the U.S. Capitol Police officer involved in the fatal shooting.

**Multiple use of force techniques.** The majority of officers (100 of 153) reported using a combination of more than one type of force. For example:

- One officer reported using empty hand techniques, baton strikes, and riot shield pushes and strikes in an attempt to keep the crowd from entering the Capitol Rotunda. The officer reported using multiple types of force as attackers punched, kicked, threw objects, and hit the officer with metal poles. The officer reported that after the officer was hit in the head, an attacker attempted to pull the officer's helmet off until the chin strap choked the officer, causing the officer to lose consciousness.
- Another officer reported using empty hand techniques after all attempts to use verbal commands failed against the attackers, who were armed with homemade weapons and discharging chemical substances, such as bear spray and tear gas.

**Empty hand control techniques.** Ninety-one officers reported using empty hand control techniques, among other uses of force. For example:

- One officer reported drawing a baton as attackers began yelling and throwing objects at the officer, but the officer eventually relied on empty hand control techniques to counter the attackers. The same officer reported that the police line was pushed back until the officer was pinned in a corner, and the officer continued to use empty hand control techniques to push and strike attackers until the officer could escape.
- Another officer reported applying empty hand control techniques after an attacker did not comply with verbal commands.

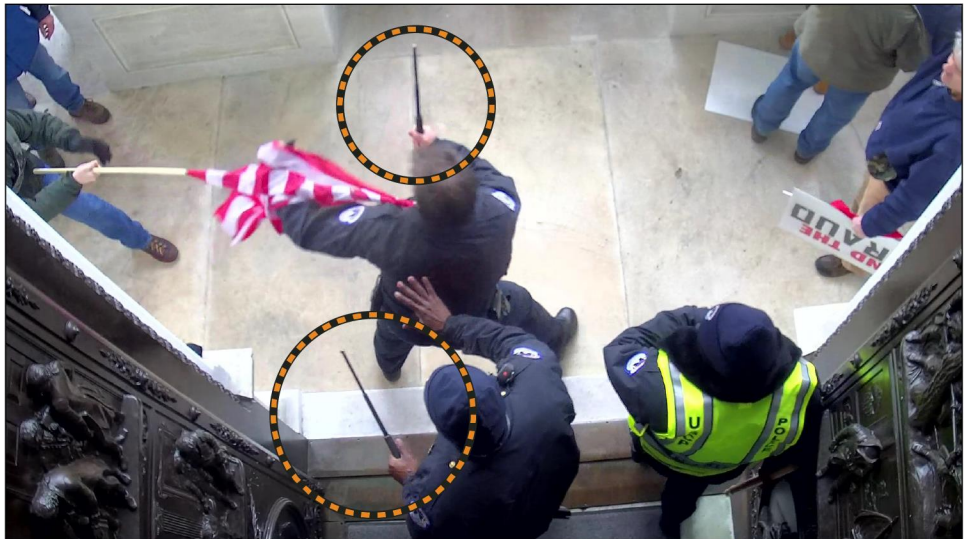
**Batons.** Eighty-three officers reported using a baton at some point during the January 6 attack (see fig. 10). For example:

- One officer reported giving verbal commands to cease and desist while the crowd dispersed chemical spray (e.g., pepper spray) and threw projectiles at the officer. Once the crowd broke through a makeshift barrier, the officer reported using a baton on the crowd while being pulled to the ground.
- Another officer reported responding to a call requesting all CDU platoons to come to the Capitol. In that process, the officer led the squad through the Russell Senate office building subway, proceeded to the first floor, and split the platoon in an attempt to hold off hundreds of violent attackers. The officer noted that attackers were

using sticks, broken glass, furniture, and chemical agents against the officers. The officer reported using a baton to strike attackers and block their advance.

- Another officer reported using verbal commands in an attempt to move attackers away from the west front of the Capitol Building. The attackers reportedly resisted, leading the officer to use a baton on them. The officer reported striking an individual who was not cooperating in the limbs, biceps, and triceps, which secured the individual's compliance.

**Figure 10: Officers Using Batons on January 6, 2021**

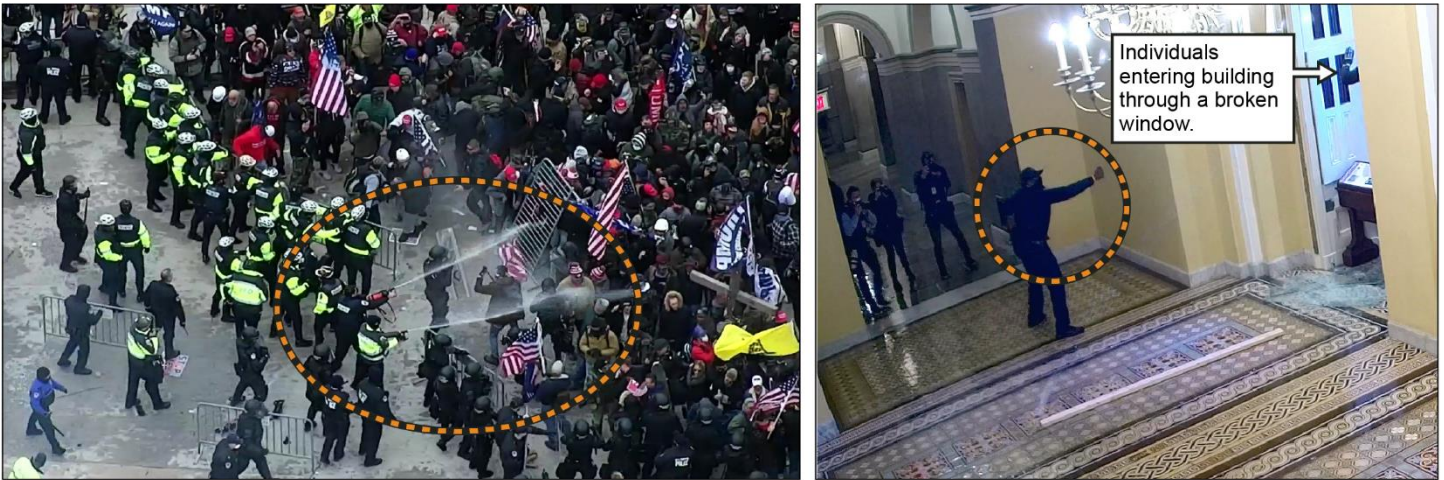


U.S. Capitol Police officers holding their batons while being assaulted by an attacker with a flag pole.  
Source: U.S. Capitol Police. | GAO-22-104829

**Chemical spray.** Thirty-four officers reported using chemical spray (see fig. 11). For example:

- After a police line was penetrated by attackers, an officer reported being taken into the crowd and physically assaulted. An officer reported deploying chemical spray to discourage the attackers from further assaulting the officer. This action dispersed the immediate crowd, which allowed officers to remove the fallen officer to a secure location.
- Another officer reported using chemical spray to stop an attacker who was assaulting another officer with a sharpened pole. The officer reported that the attacker, after being sprayed, stopped assaulting the officer and retreated into the crowd.

Figure 11: Officers Using Chemical Spray on January 6, 2021



Officers using chemical spray dispersed via a stream (left); an officer pointing chemical spray at individuals breaking into the Capitol Building through a broken window (right).

Source: U.S. Capitol Police. | GAO-22-104829

Note: The image on the left includes officers from both the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

**Less-lethal munitions.** Seven Capitol Police officers reported using less-lethal munitions during the January 6 attack, such as chemical munitions dispersed using a compressed air launcher (see fig. 12). For example:

- One officer reported launching chemical munitions at a crowd of attackers attempting to advance further into the restricted perimeter of the Capitol complex. The officer further reported that while some attackers who were hit with the munitions continued to attack the Capitol Building, other attackers were provided medical care.
- Another officer reported deploying chemical munitions in response to an overwhelming number of attackers who were aggressively attacking officers throughout the Capitol complex.



Figure 12: Officers Using Less-Lethal Munitions on January 6, 2021



Officer holding a less-lethal launcher (left); an officer points a less-lethal launcher at individuals attempting to enter doorway into the Capitol building.  
Source: U.S. Capitol Police. | GAO-22-104829

Note: This image includes officers from both the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police Department.

**Withdrew firearm.** Thirty-seven officers reported withdrawing their firearm during the attack, which in many instances was preceded by a sequence of escalating actions. For example:

- One officer reported that officers attempted to secure the House floor by placing furniture in front of the doors. The room was occupied by Members of Congress, staff, and the press. The officer issued warnings and demands to the attackers to stop and that lethal force may be used. Subsequent to hearing reports on the radio about shots being fired and multiple bangs at the door, the officer reported withdrawing his firearm, along with four other officers, and pointing it at the door. The officer reported that the five officers did not discharge their firearms, and the room was secured with assistance from officers on the other side of the door. Subsequently, officers evacuated Members and staff from the room.
- An officer reported responding to a “shots fired” call wherein no additional information was provided. The officer reported withdrawing a firearm when approaching the potential location of shots fired. Upon arrival, the officer assessed the scene and communicated with other

officers. The officer then returned the firearm to the holster because, as conveyed by fellow officers, there was no more immediate danger.

- Another officer reported a sequence of escalating actions leading up to withdrawing a firearm. Specifically, the officer reported the use of empty hand control techniques to try to stop attackers wielding sticks, bats, metal poles, and chemical irritants. The situation escalated, and the officer then deployed chemical spray. The spray caused the attackers to temporarily withdraw. The officer noted, however, that while the immediate attackers withdrew, other attackers soon appeared. When the officer heard shots fired call over the radio, the officer reported withdrawing the firearm and proceeded to secure an area with other officers.

**Firing of firearm.** One officer reported firing a firearm during the January 6 attack. The officer reported that around 100 attackers—armed with various blunt force weapons—were approaching the Speaker’s lobby and chamber where Members and staff were located. The officer reported that attackers shattered a door window. The officer yelled multiple times, directing the attackers to not enter the area. The officer reported that one individual, who was wearing a backpack, proceeded through the broken window. At that point, wanting to prevent that individual from harming others, the officer fired once. The individual was struck by the bullet. The officer reported that the attackers then stopped trying to breach the area.

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## Capitol Police Officers Responding to Our Survey Had Varying Perspectives and Suggestions for Improvement on Preparedness

Our analysis of responses from 315 of 1,782 officers we surveyed who reported they were on duty at the Capitol complex on January 6, 2021,

found that respondents had varying perspectives (with additional information provided below):<sup>44</sup>

- Respondents varied in terms of their years of service, crowd control experience, and use of force prior to or during the January 6 attack. Many respondents indicated that they interacted directly with and were assaulted by demonstrators.
- Views were mixed on whether respondents felt prepared to use force and apply crowd control tactics during the January 6 attack.
- Most respondents indicated that preoperational guidance (e.g., pre-shift briefings, roll calls, and emails from supervisors) related to planned crowd control tactics for January 6, 2021 was unclear or not provided. Similarly, most respondents also indicated that information received after the arrival of demonstrators was unclear or not provided.
- Some respondents expressed concerns and identified ways to improve their preparedness for future large-scale events, including issues related to use of force, training, equipment, concerns with the department, information and intelligence sharing, planning, and officer workforce.
- Some respondents expressed that they faced challenging circumstances that made it difficult to respond to the attack, such as the sheer number of demonstrators and the chaotic situation.
- Some respondents complimented their fellow officers, both from within the Capitol Police force as well as other law enforcement agencies who supported them that day.

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<sup>44</sup>To understand officer perspectives on preparation and training related to the January 6 attack, we conducted an electronic survey of Capitol Police officers. We estimate a 20 percent survey response rate from those we determined were eligible for the survey (i.e., reported that they were on duty on January 6, 2021), following American Association of Public Opinion Research guidance. Further, because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not, and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day; however, we believe that the experiences and perspectives of the officers who were on duty that day and chose to respond to our survey provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. For more information on how we calculated our response rate, see app. I. For a copy of our survey, see app. II. Not all 315 officers answered every question.

## Some Officers Reported Having Little Prior Experience with Crowd Control and Others Reported They Were Assaulted during the January 6 Attack

Respondents varied in terms of years of service, crowd control experience, and use of force prior to or during the January 6 attack. Further, many respondents indicated that they interacted directly with and were assaulted by demonstrators. See appendix III for additional information on our survey results.

### Years of Experience

Years of experience varied among respondents, as shown in table 1. About 70 percent of respondents (220 of 314) had 10 or more years of experience as a Capitol Police officer, and about 22 percent (68 of 314) had 5 or less years of experience.<sup>45</sup>

**Table 1: Survey Respondents' Reported Years of Experience as a Law Enforcement Officer at the U.S. Capitol Police, as of January 6, 2021**

Years of experience	Count	Percent of respondents
Less than 2 years	12	3.8
2 years to less than 5 years	56	17.8
5 years to less than 10 years	26	8.3
10 years to less than 15 years	59	18.8
15 years to less than 20 years	99	31.5
20 or more years	62	19.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer this question. Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 6 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

<sup>45</sup>Some officers also had prior law enforcement experience at other agencies. See app. III for more information. One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021, did not answer this question.

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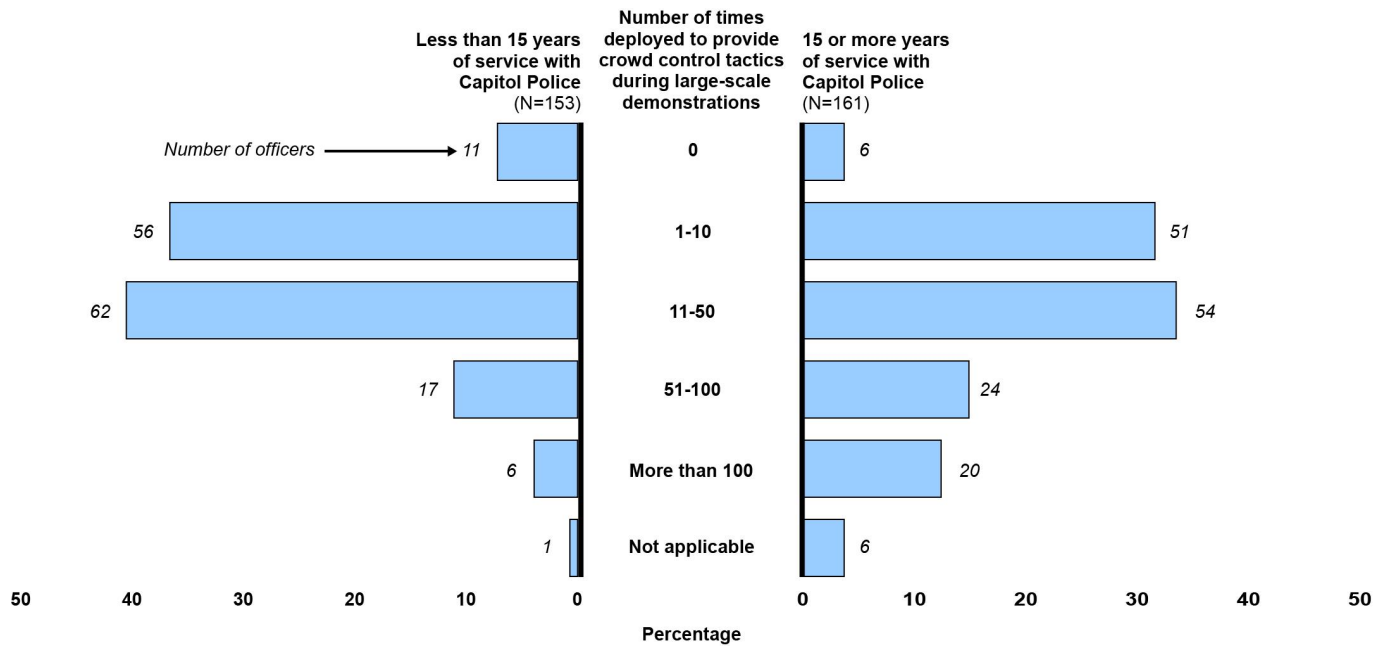
Prior Crowd Control Experience

Respondents' prior crowd control experience varied. Some respondents indicated that they had limited experience providing crowd control for large-scale demonstrations prior to the January 6 attack, as shown in figure 13.<sup>46</sup> For example, about 39 percent of respondents (124 of 314) indicated that they had been deployed 10 or fewer times to provide crowd control while employed as a Capitol Police officer prior to the attack. About 37 percent of respondents (116 of 314) indicated that they had deployed 11 to 50 times, and about 21 percent of respondents (67 of 314) indicated that they had been deployed more than 50 times. Further, while the survey indicated variation in crowd control experience on the basis of the respondents' years of Capitol Police service, some officers with more years of service also indicated that they had relatively little experience providing crowd control. Specifically, about 44 percent of respondents with less than 15 years of experience (67 of 153) indicated that they had deployed 10 or fewer times to provide crowd control, and about 35 percent of respondents with more than 15 years of experience (57 of 161) also indicated that they had deployed 10 or fewer times to do so.

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<sup>46</sup>For the purposes of our survey, a "large-scale demonstration" refers to the kind of large demonstrations, rallies, and protests that might typically occur on Capitol complex grounds or other locations in terms of the size, behavior, and general nature of the crowd. Such demonstrations may be largely peaceful but have the potential for violence by demonstrators. One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021, did not answer this question.

**Figure 13: Survey Respondents' Crowd Control Experience Prior to the January 6 Attack**



Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

**Accessible Data for Figure 13: Survey Respondents' Crowd Control Experience Prior to the January 6 Attack**

Number of times deployed to provide crowd control tactics during large-scale demonstrations	Less than 15 years of service with Capitol Police number of officers	Less than 15 years of service with Capitol Police percentage of officers	15 or more years of service with Capitol Police number of officers	15 or more years of service with Capitol Police percentage of officers
0	11	7.20%	6	7.20%
1 to 10	56	36.60%	51	36.60%
11 to 50	62	40.50%	54	40.50%
51 to 100	17	11.10%	24	11.10%
More than 100	6	3.90%	20	3.90%
Not applicable	1	0.70%	6	0.70%

Note: One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer both questions. "Years of service" refers to service as a law enforcement officer with the U.S. Capitol Police. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this figure relate to questions 6 and 11 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

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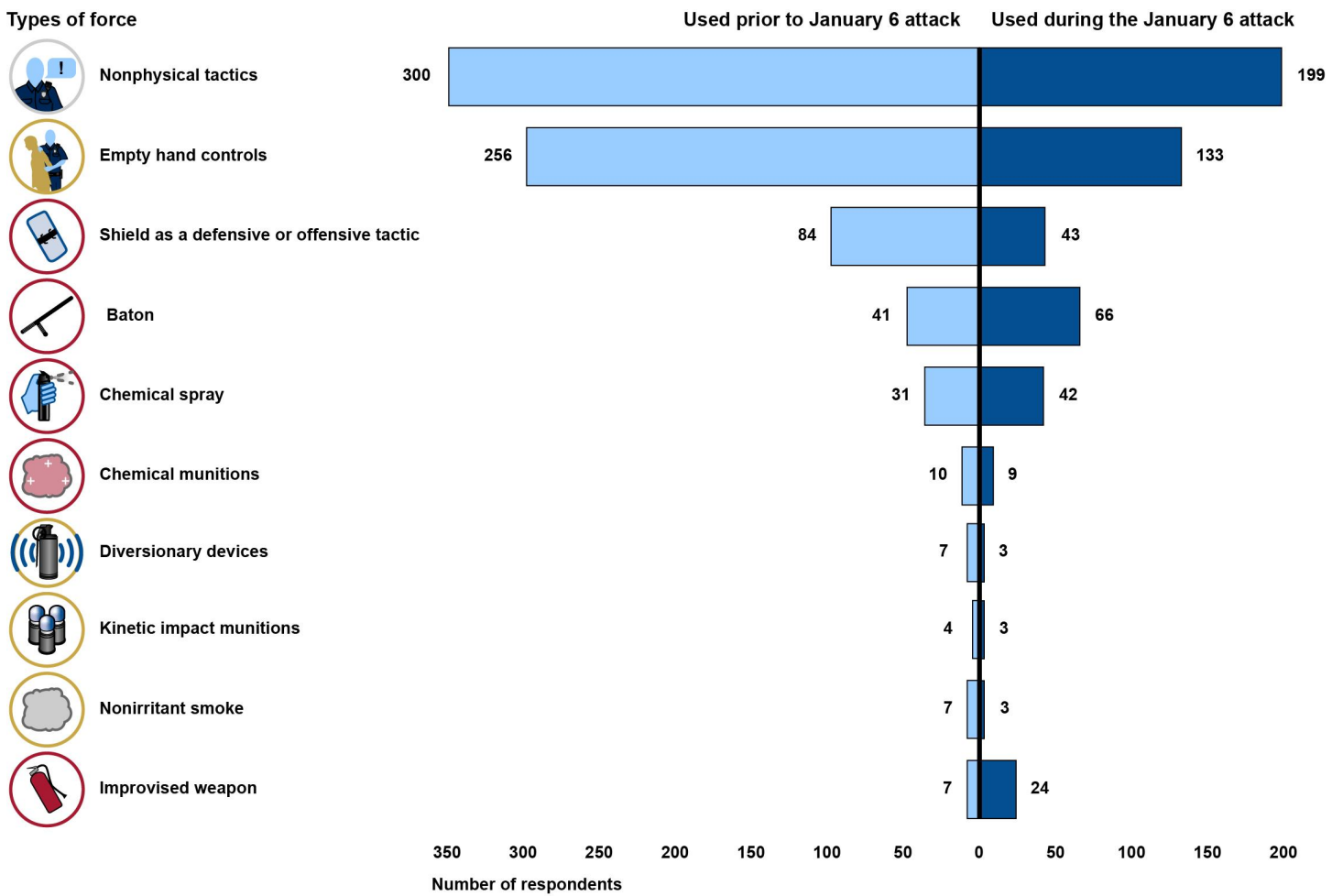
Use of Force Experience

Respondents had various experience using certain types of force prior to the January 6 attack. As shown in figure 14, most respondents indicated they had prior experience using nonphysical tactics (300 respondents, or 95 percent) and empty hand controls (256 respondents, or 81 percent), but fewer indicated they had experience with batons (41 respondents, or 13 percent); chemical spray (31 respondents, or 10 percent); and other types of force.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Six of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer all portions of this question.

**Figure 14: Survey Respondents' Experiences Using Force Prior to and during the January 6 Attack**



Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829



**Accessible Data for Figure 14: Survey Respondents' Experiences Using Force Prior to and during the January 6 Attack**

Category	Used prior to January 6 attack	Used during the January 6 attack
Nonphysical tactics	300	199
Empty hand controls	256	133
Shield as a defensive or offensive tactic	84	43
Baton	41	66
Chemical spray	31	42
Other chemical agents	10	9
Diversionary devices	7	3
Kinetic impact munitions	4	3
Nonirritant smoke	7	3
Improvised weapon	7	24

Note: We did not request information from survey respondents on their experiences using lethal force, such as withdrawing or firing their firearm. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this figure relate to questions 10 and 12 from our survey (see app. II for more information). Some officers responded that they used more than one type of force on the day of the attack. Six of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021, did not answer all portions of this question.

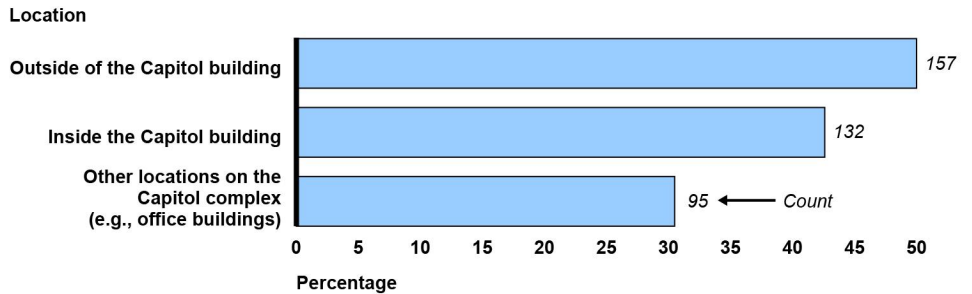
Further, survey responses indicated that the January 6 attack was the first time that some officers had used certain types of force (outside of training). For example, 56 of the 66 officers who indicated using their baton during the January 6 attack also indicated that they had not used it prior to the January 6 attack. Similarly, 38 of the 42 officers who reported using chemical spray during the January 6 attack also indicated that they had not used chemical spray outside of training prior to the attack.

### Interaction with Demonstrators

Most respondents indicated that they had direct interaction (i.e., physical proximity or contact) with demonstrators at the Capitol complex on January 6, 2021, including outside and inside the Capitol Building and at other locations on the complex, such as congressional office buildings (see fig. 15). Specifically, about two-thirds of respondents (206 of 308) indicated that they had direct interaction with demonstrators in at least

one of these locations.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, about half of respondents said that they had direct interaction with demonstrators outside of the Capitol Building during the attack. About a third of respondents (102 of 308) indicated that they did not have direct interaction with demonstrators at any locations on the Capitol complex.

**Figure 15: U.S. Capitol Police Survey Respondents’ Locations of Direct Interaction with Demonstrators during the January 6 Attack**



Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

**Accessible Data for Figure 15: U.S. Capitol Police Survey Respondents’ Locations of Direct Interaction with Demonstrators during the January 6 Attack**

Category	Percentage	Number
Outside of the Capitol building	50%	157
Inside the Capitol building	42.60%	132
Other locations on the Capitol complex (e.g., office buildings)	30.50%	95

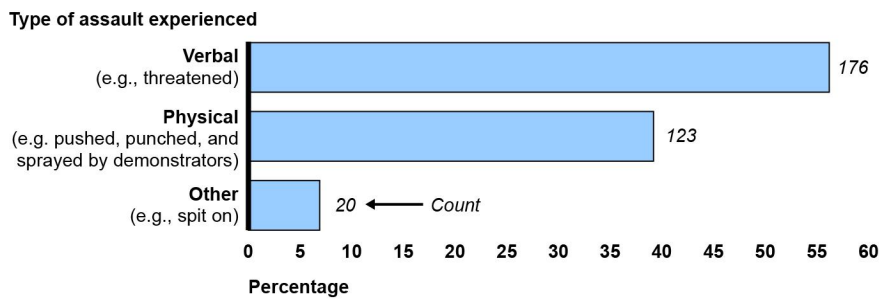
Note: For the purposes of this figure, direct interaction referred to physical proximity or contact with demonstrators. Percentages do not add up to 100 because officers had the option to indicate multiple locations with direct interaction with demonstrators. Seven of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer all portions of this question. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers’ names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this figure relate to question 8 from our survey (see appendix II for more information).

<sup>48</sup>Seven of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer all portions of this question.

### Assaults on Officers

More than half of respondents indicated that they experienced some type of assault from demonstrators during the January 6 attack. Specifically, about 56 percent indicated that they had experienced verbal assault (176 of 313), and about 39 percent (123 of 314) indicating that they had experienced physical assault (see fig. 16).<sup>49</sup> Other types of assaults identified by officers included being spit at or sprayed with various types of chemicals (e.g., bear spray or pepper spray).

**Figure 16: Types of Assault Experienced by Survey Respondents during the January 6 Attack**



Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

**Accessible Data for Figure 16: Types of Assault Experienced by Survey Respondents during the January 6 Attack**

Category	Percentage	Number
Verbal (e.g., threatened)	56.20%	176
Physical (e.g. pushed, punched, and sprayed by demonstrators)	39.20%	123
Other (e.g., spit on)	6.90%	20

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because officers had the option to indicate multiple types of assault. One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer this question. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this figure relate to question 9 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

<sup>49</sup>Twenty-four of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer all portions of this question.

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## Views Were Mixed on Whether Respondents Felt Prepared to Apply Force and Crowd Control Tactics

There were mixed views among respondents on whether they felt prepared to use force and apply crowd control tactics during the January 6 attack.

### Perspectives on Preparedness to Use Force

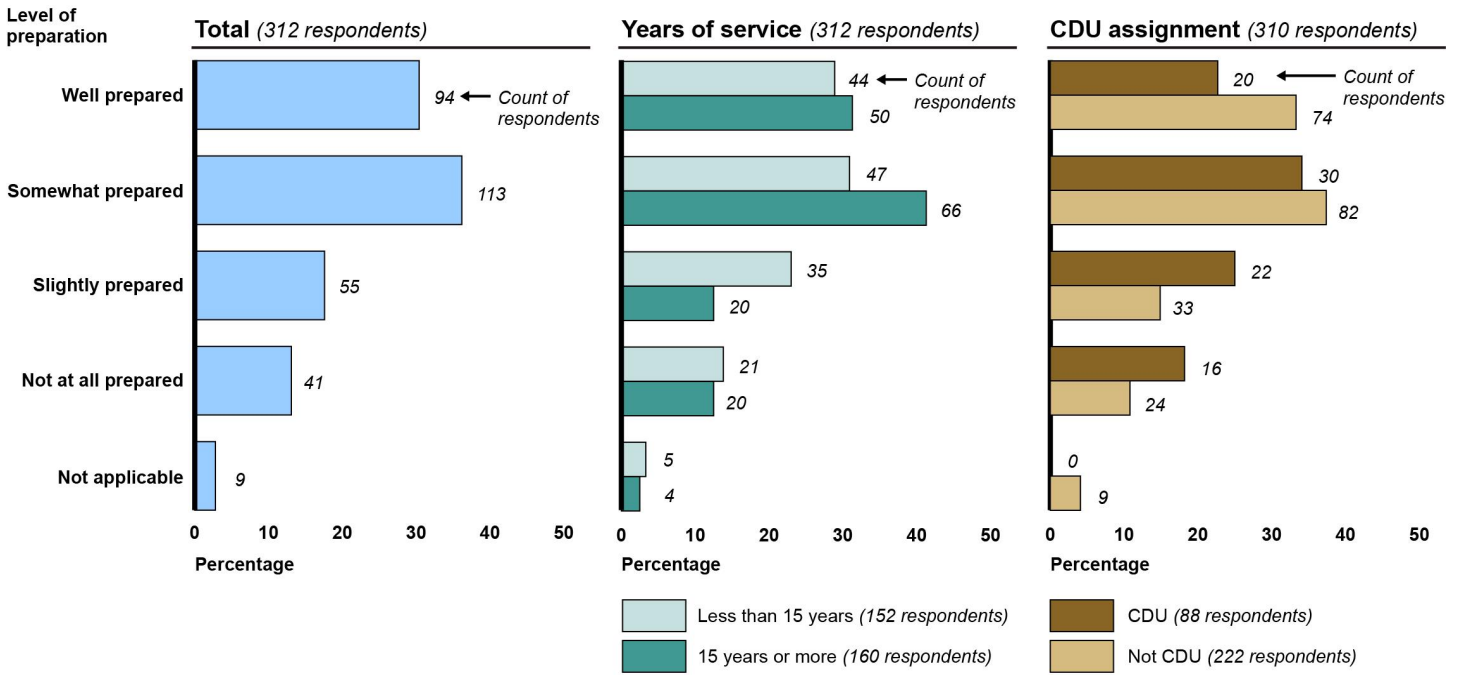
Regarding use of force, most respondents indicated that they felt prepared to apply force during the January 6 attack, as shown in figure 17.<sup>50</sup> Specifically, about 66 percent of respondents (207 of 312) indicated that they felt well or somewhat prepared to use force that day, and about 31 percent of respondents (96 of 312) stated that they felt slightly or not at all prepared to use force.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Officers expressed a similar sentiment regarding their preparation to use force specifically on the basis of the training that they received prior to the attack. See app. III for more information. Three of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021, did not answer this question. These results relate to question 15 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

<sup>51</sup>About 3 percent of respondents (nine of 312) stated that this question was not applicable to them for a variety of reasons, such as working in an assignment that did not involve being in contact with demonstrators that day (e.g., command center).

**Figure 17: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Preparation to Use Force during the January 6 Attack, Broken Out by Years of U.S. Capitol Police Service and Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) Assignment Status**



Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

**Accessible Data for Figure 17: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Preparation to Use Force during the January 6 Attack, Broken Out by Years of U.S. Capitol Police Service and Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU) Assignment Status**

Category	Total percentage of officers (n=312)	Total number of officers (N=312)	Percentage of officers with less than 15 years of service (N=312)	Number of officers with less than 15 years of service (N=312)	Percentage of officers with 15 years or more of service (N=312)	Number of officers with 15 years or more of service (N=312)	Percentage of officers assigned to CDU (N=310)	Number of officers assigned to CDU (N=310)	Percentage of officers not assigned to CDU (N=310)	Number of officers not assigned to CDU (N=310)
Well prepared	30.40%	94	28.90%	44	31.30%	50	22.70%	20	33.30%	74
Somewhat prepared	36.20%	113	30.90%	47	41.30%	66	34.10%	30	37.40%	82
Slightly prepared	17.60%	55	23%	0.35	12.50%	0.2	25%	22	14.90%	33
Not at all prepared	13.10%	41	13.80%	0.21	12.50%	0.2	18.20%	16	10.80%	24
Not applicable	2.80%	9	3.30%	0.05	2.5	0.04	0%	0	4.10%	9

Note: For the purposes of this figure, "years of service" refers to service as a law enforcement officer with the U.S. Capitol Police. Five of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer every question represented in this figure. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this figure relate to questions 4, 6, and 15 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

The level of perceived preparation among respondents varied on the basis of their years of service. For example, about 60 percent of respondents with less than 15 years of experience (91 of 152) indicated that they felt well or somewhat prepared, whereas about 73 percent of respondents with 15 or more years of experience (116 of 160) indicated that they felt well or somewhat prepared. Further, the level of preparation varied on the basis of whether respondents were assigned to the CDU on the day of the attack. Specifically, 156 of 222 non-CDU respondents and 50 of 88 respondents who were part of the CDU indicated that they felt well or somewhat prepared to use force during the January 6 attack.

In October 2021, Capitol Police officials stated that although CDU officers are provided additional training and experience related to large-scale demonstrations, such officers also have additional obligations during

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demonstrations and, therefore (in light of our survey findings), may have higher expectations for what it means to be prepared to use force in such situations.

### Perspectives on Preparedness to Apply Crowd Control Tactics

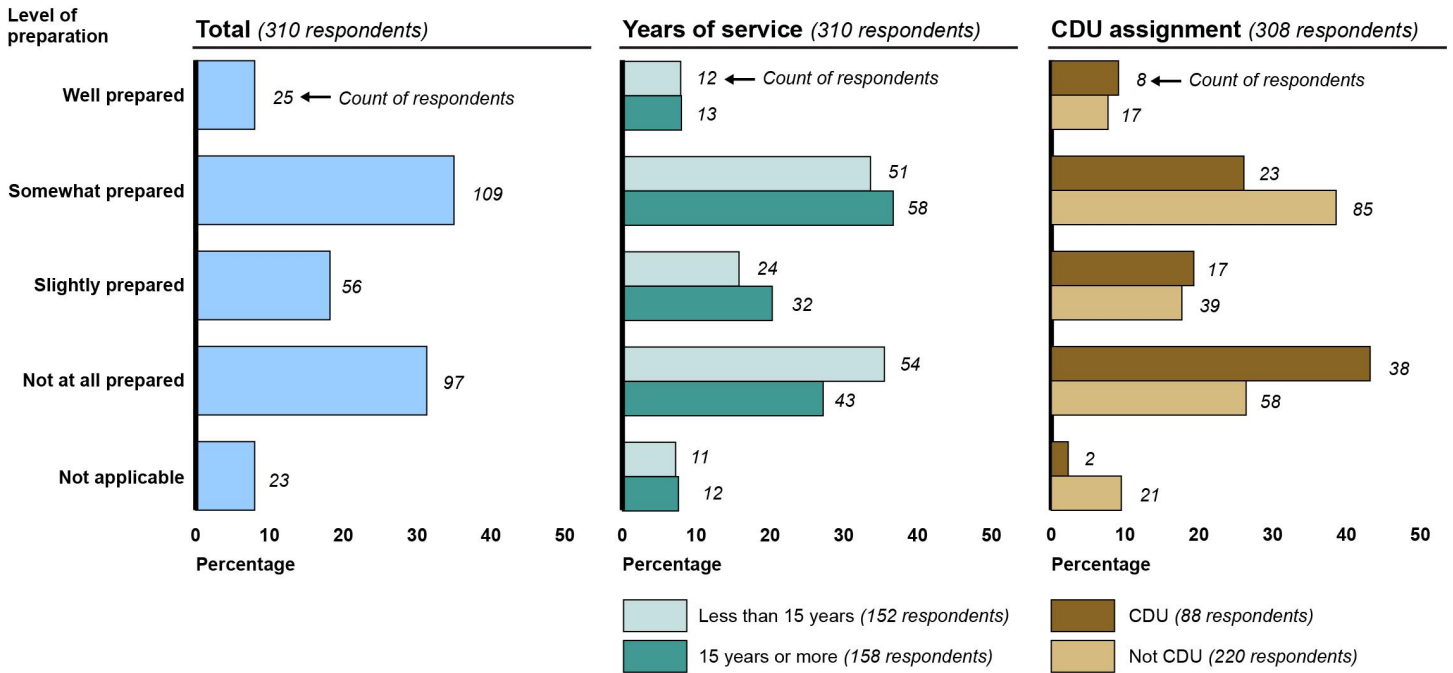
Respondents' views on whether they were prepared to apply crowd control tactics during the January 6 attack were mixed.<sup>52</sup> Specifically, about 43 percent of respondents (134 of 310) indicated that they felt well or somewhat prepared to apply crowd control tactics that day, when looking back on the events of the January 6 attack (see fig. 18). About 49 percent of respondents (153 of 310) indicated that they felt slightly or not at all prepared.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>Officers expressed similar sentiments regarding their preparation to apply crowd control tactics specifically on the basis of the training that they received prior to the attack. See app. III for more information.

<sup>53</sup>Seven of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer all parts of this question. About 7 percent of respondents (23 of 310) stated that this question was not applicable to them for a variety of reasons, such as working in an assignment that did not involve being in contact with demonstrators. For example, an officer assigned to dignitary protection may have had limited contact with demonstrators that day, but did not need to apply crowd control tactics because the officer was focused on protecting a member of Congress.

**Figure 18: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Their Preparation to Apply Crowd Control Tactics during the January 6 Attack, Broken Out by Years of Service and Whether They Were Assigned to the Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU)**



Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829



**Accessible Data for Figure 18: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Their Preparation to Apply Crowd Control Tactics during the January 6 Attack, Broken Out by Years of Service and Whether They Were Assigned to the Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU)**

Category	Total percentage of officers (n=310)	Total number of officers (N=310)	Percentage of officers with less than 15 years of service (N=310)	Number of officers with less than 15 years of service (N=310)	Percentage of officers with 15 years or more of service (N=310)	Number of officers with 15 years or more of service (N=310)	Percentage of officers assigned to CDU (N=308)	Number of officers assigned to CDU (N=308)	Percentage of officers not assigned to CDU (N=308)	Number of officers not assigned to CDU (N=308)
Well prepared	8%	25	7.90%	12	8%	13	9.10%	8	7.70%	17
Somewhat prepared	35%	109	33.60%	51	36.70%	58	26.10%	23	38.60%	85
Slightly prepared	18.20%	56	15.80%	24	20.30%	32	19.30%	17	17.70%	39
Not at all prepared	31.30%	97	35.50%	54	27.20%	43	43.20%	38	26.40%	58
Not applicable	8%	23	7.20%	11	7.60%	12	2.30%	2	9.50%	21

Note: For the purposes of this figure, 'years of service' refers to service as a law enforcement officer with the U.S. Capitol Police. Seven of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer every question represented in this figure. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this figure relate to questions 4, 6, and 16 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

The level of preparation varied among respondents on the basis of their years of service, particularly for those who felt not at all prepared to apply crowd control tactics. For example, about 36 percent of respondents with less than 15 years of experience (54 of 152) indicated that they felt not at all prepared, whereas about 27 percent of respondents with 15 or more years of experience (43 of 158) indicated that they felt not at all prepared. Further, the level of preparation varied on the basis of whether or not the respondent was assigned to the CDU on the day of the attack, with CDU respondents indicating that they felt less prepared. Specifically, 38 of 88 CDU respondents and 58 of 220 of non-CDU respondents indicated that they felt not at all prepared to apply crowd control tactics.

In October 2021, Capitol Police officials stated that although CDU officers get additional training and experience related to large-scale demonstrations, these officers also have additional obligations during demonstrations and, therefore (in light of our survey findings), may have higher expectations for what it means to be prepared to apply crowd control tactics in such situations.

### Most Respondents Were Dissatisfied with Crowd Control Guidance for January 6 Events

A little over half of survey respondents indicated that preoperational guidance (e.g., preshift briefings, roll calls, and emails from supervisors) related to planned crowd control tactics for January 6 was unclear or not provided. Specifically, about 53 percent of respondents (167 of 314) indicated that the preoperational guidance was slightly or not at all clear (see table 2).<sup>54</sup> Further, about 33 percent of respondents (102 of 314) indicated that this survey question was not applicable to them—of these, 44 indicated that it was because no such guidance was provided to them and 58 indicated that it was not applicable for some other reason, such as their assignment did not interact with the crowd or they were recalled back to the Capitol due to the emergency and, therefore, did not have an opportunity to obtain guidance. Respondents also expressed concerns related to the lack of information-sharing and planning in their open-ended responses, which we discuss later in this report.<sup>55</sup>

**Table 2: Survey Respondents’ Perspectives on the Clarity of Preoperational Guidance Received from Supervisors Concerning the Use of Crowd Control Tactics on January 6, 2021**

Survey response	Count	Percent of respondents
Very clear	8	2.5
Somewhat clear	37	11.8
Slightly clear	33	10.5
Not at all clear	134	42.7
Not applicable because no guidance was given	44	14.0
Not applicable for other reason (e.g., assignment had no contact with crowd)	58	18.5

<sup>54</sup>One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer this question.

<sup>55</sup>We also have ongoing work on information- and intelligence-sharing related to the January 6 attack that we anticipate issuing early in 2022.

Survey response	Count	Percent of respondents
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, “preoperational guidance” refers to any communication respondents received from supervisors prior to beginning their duties on January 6. The guidance may have been received the morning of that day or in the days prior to their shift, such as a verbal briefing prior to their shift or emails from management on the planned crowd control tactics for that day. One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, did not answer this question. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers’ names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 18 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

According to Capitol Police officials, the types of information provided to officers prior to the January 6, 2021 events varied on the basis of the officer’s rank. For example, officers who are lieutenants, sergeants, or higher may have had access to intelligence assessments that lower-ranking officers (e.g., private first class) would not have had access to. While the responses suggested that higher-ranking officers may have found the guidance more clear than lower-ranking officers, our survey response rate was too low to identify if this difference was significant. Specifically, about 129 out of 227 of lower-ranking officers (e.g., private first class) indicated that preoperational guidance was slightly or not at all clear, and 35 of 227 of these officers indicated that no guidance was given to them. In comparison, 38 of 87 of higher-ranking officers (e.g., lieutenant, sergeant, and higher) indicated that preoperational guidance was slightly or not at all clear, and nine of 87 of these officers indicated that no guidance was given to them.

About half of survey respondents indicated that guidance concerning crowd control tactics received after the arrival of demonstrators (i.e., as the attack was occurring) was generally unclear or not provided. Specifically, about 51 percent of respondents (161 of 314) indicated that such guidance was slightly or not at all clear (see table 3).<sup>56</sup> Further, about 15 percent of respondents (48 of 314) indicated that this survey question was not applicable to them because no such guidance was provided to them. In addition, about 24 percent of respondents (76 of 314) stated that this question was not applicable to them for a variety of other

<sup>56</sup>One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer this question. Later in this report, we describe respondent views on such guidance and information-sharing on the basis of our analysis of the survey’s open-ended questions.

reasons, such as that their assignment did not interact with the crowd or that they were recalled back to the Capitol due to the emergency and, therefore, did not have an opportunity to obtain guidance. Respondents also expressed concerns related to the lack of communication from leadership during the attack, which we discuss later in this report.

**Table 3: Survey Respondents’ Perspectives on the Clarity of Guidance They Received from Supervisors Concerning the Use of Crowd Control Tactics during the January 6 Attack**

Survey response	Count	Percent of respondents
Very clear	5	1.6
Somewhat clear	24	7.6
Slightly clear	23	7.3
Not at all clear	138	43.9
Not applicable because no guidance was given	48	15.3
Not applicable for other reason (e.g., assignment had no contact with crowd)	76	24.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, guidance received during the January 6 attack refers to any communication respondents received on changes to the previously established plans for crowd control tactics that day on the basis of the changing nature of the crowd amassing at the Capitol complex. Such guidance may have been communicated to respondents from their supervisors or management via other sources. One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6 did not answer this question. Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers’ names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 19 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

### Officers Responding to the Survey Expressed Other Concerns Related to Events on January 6 and Suggested Ways to Improve Preparedness

In response to open-ended questions in our survey, respondents identified various factors that made them feel unprepared for events that

unfolded on January 6, 2021.<sup>57</sup> They also suggested ways that would help them be better prepared for future large-scale demonstrations. Below, we discuss the most common topics we identified in the officers' responses to open-ended questions in our survey, such as questions related to why they felt unprepared or found guidance to be unclear (if applicable) or what suggestions they have to improve officers' ability to respond to future events similar to the January 6 attack. The most common topics we identified included issues related to use of force, training, equipment, concerns with the department, information- and intelligence-sharing, planning, and officer workforce. Respondents also noted that they faced challenging circumstances that made it difficult to respond to the attack, such as the sheer number of demonstrators and the chaotic situation. Finally, respondents complimented their fellow officers, both from within the Capitol Police as well as from other law enforcement agencies who supported them that day.

### Suggestions Related to Use of Force

Respondents expressed various concerns and suggestions related to the use of force, including (1) the perceived discouragement from leadership from using force, (2) the need to clarify the use of force during situations like what was faced during the January 6 attack, and (3) a concern with optics by leadership. Respondents also expressed differing perspectives on whether additional force should have been used that day.

**Perceived discouragement from using force.** Eighty respondents identified concerns related to the use of force, such as the perception that the use of force was discouraged or that officers were hesitant to use force. Of these, 57 respondents indicated that they felt that the leadership culture of the Capitol Police generally discouraged them from using force or that officers were hesitant to use force because of a fear of disciplinary actions. One respondent noted, "Most importantly, and most difficult, is to try to change the culture where officers are afraid to use force when

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<sup>57</sup>To analyze the open-ended responses to our survey, two of our analysts coded officer responses using various categories. Officer responses could be assigned multiple categories. Our open-ended questions were designed to be broad enough to allow respondents the ability to address a variety of topics of importance to them. Our analysis of responses, which addressed a wide range of topics, focuses on the most common themes we identified across all open-ended questions. Because officers had discretion to address whatever topics they wanted in their open-ended responses, it is unknown whether respondents who did not address certain topics lacked an opinion related to that issue. See questions 13 through 21 in app. II to view the open-ended questions in our survey. Five respondents did not answer any of our open ended questions. Our survey was available for respondents to complete from June 1, 2021 to September 1, 2021.

appropriate. I saw too many instances where officers were questioning whether they could use force because they were afraid of getting in trouble. If ever there was a time when force is appropriate, a mob violently forcing their way into the Capitol would be it.” Several respondents also stated that they felt that the department would not back them, even when force was used under justifiable circumstances.

In reviewing our preliminary survey findings in October 2021 with the Capitol Police, officials stated that they neither encourage nor discourage officers from using force but instead train officers to use the appropriate level of force necessary and to aim to de-escalate situations so that force is not needed. The officials also stated that disciplinary action by the department related to officer use of force has been extremely rare, historically.

Several respondents also noted that they felt that they were not empowered to decide whether they could use force and that they needed to ask their supervisor for permission, which may have been difficult during the chaotic atmosphere of the attack. Further, several respondents stated that they were told by supervisors and management that they should not use force that day. The CDU plan for January 6, 2021, stated that all officers were to follow the Capitol Police use of force policy and that, unless exigent circumstances justify immediate action, officers were not to independently make arrests or employ force without command authorization. The plan also stated that the CDU field force commander was to have primary responsibility to authorize less-lethal force options, and that exigent circumstances would dictate other lawful deployment of less-lethal force options.

**Need to clarify use of force policy.** Among the 80 respondents that identified concerns related to the use of force, some were unsure about the appropriate use of force during January 6-type situations, such as when greater force is warranted when facing a large, violent crowd. Specifically, 39 respondents expressed the need to clarify the appropriate use of force during situations like the January 6 attack. For example, one respondent stated that Capitol Police trainers “were extremely vague to us about use of force and when it is proper and when it is not.” Several officers stated that there was a need for guidelines or standard operating procedures on what types of force are authorized to prevent people from breaching the Capitol Building or during a riot. Several respondents also stated that additional clarity was needed on when deadly force is appropriate.

**Role of optics and limited autonomy.** Further, some respondents indicated that optics were affecting security decisions, including the use of force and physical security needs. Specifically, 41 respondents conveyed that optics (e.g., the appearance of officers as threatening) were playing a role in security-related decisions. Several respondents attributed the Capitol Police’s use of force culture and the discouragement to use force to a concern with optics. For example, one respondent stated that the “department is always worried about optics and never really want us to go hands on with the public.” Several respondents stated that the concern with optics was related to leadership’s perception of the desires of Members of Congress.

Further, 15 respondents suggested that the Capitol Police needed more autonomy to make decisions, including as it relates to the Capitol Police Board. For example, one respondent stated that the structure of the Capitol Police Board needed to be changed to provide autonomy. As previously noted, in certain cases, the Capitol Police Chief must submit a request for outside assistance to the Board for approval.<sup>58</sup> Several respondents stated that the members of the board, which include the House and Senate Sergeants at Arms, as well as the Architect of the Capitol, inhibited the Capitol Police’s ability to make security-related decisions because those members deferred to the will of Congress.

**Differing perspectives on whether additional force should have been used.** Respondents also expressed varying opinions on whether more force should have been used in a scenario like the January 6 attack.<sup>59</sup> For example, several respondents said that the use of more lethal force would have been justified, but that such force was not used because there had not been training for an attack of such magnitude or that they feared the department would not support their use of such force. One respondent stated that while the officer thought more force should have been used, the officer understood why other officers may have been afraid to brandish their weapons when their lives were being threatened and in immediate danger. Other respondents, on the other hand, felt that using more lethal force would have resulted in worse outcomes. For example,

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<sup>58</sup>Since January 6, 2021, some of these authorities have been amended, although the general statutory framework for obtaining outside assistance is still in place. For more information, see [GAO-22-105001](#).

<sup>59</sup>Our survey did not include a question asking for the respondent’s opinions on whether more force should have been used by Capitol Police officers during the January 6 attack. However, some respondents offered such opinions in their open-ended responses. See app. II for a copy of our survey.

one respondent stated that using more lethal force on January 6 would have resulted in the deaths of potentially hundreds of demonstrators, hundreds of officers being put on administrative leave, and the election results could not have been certified by Congress because the Capitol Building would have been closed as a crime scene for weeks. Another respondent noted that using deadly force within a crowd that large may have resulted in unintended collateral casualties.

### Suggestions Related to Training

Respondents expressed various concerns and suggestions related to training, including the need for (1) more training, particularly on crowd control; (2) training that addresses large or violent crowds; (3) training that is more realistic; and (4) other improvements to officer training.

**Need for more training.** Most respondents stated that more training was needed, particularly on crowd control. Specifically, 180 respondents indicated that more training was needed across various areas. Of these, 128 respondents suggested that crowd control training needed to be improved and offered more frequently, for both CDU and non-CDU officers. Of the 128 respondents that suggested more crowd control training, 42 indicated that they were part of the CDU on January 6, 2021, and 86 indicated that they were not part of the CDU that day.

Some respondents stated that refresher training on crowd control tactics was not often offered after they initially received such training when they first joined the Capitol Police force. For example, 48 respondents noted that it had been several years since they had participated in any crowd control or use of force training. For example, one respondent stated, “The whole in service training of officers needs to be done on a more regular basis and not just to satisfy the regulatory/legal requirements that the [department] faces. In all of my years on the [department] (over 18 now) I have been to no more than 5 classes of crowd control / use of force.” Further, at least 14 respondents indicated that it had been more than 10 years since they had participated in crowd control or use of force training.

**Need for large and violent crowd control training.** Many respondents stated that training did not generally address large or violent crowds. Specifically, 84 respondents indicated that their training, including CDU training, did not address very large or violent crowds, which contributed to why some of them felt unprepared on January 6. These respondents stated that their prior crowd control training generally addressed smaller groups that were nonviolent and generally cooperative with law



enforcement. For example, one respondent noted that most of the previous events requiring crowd control involved compliant participants who coordinated with the Capitol Police prior to the event. Another respondent stated, “We were not trained well on use of force during a riot situation. Our training always consisted of a mild 4-6 person crowd, not hundreds of people with Kevlar, brass knuckles, chemical sprays and riot gear.”

Further, several respondents identified a need to address certain topics in training related to what actions to take once they have lost control of the crowd, such as what to do if the crowd flanks your police line or how to take back control of the building after it has been breached. For example, one respondent stated that the officer had not received information on the evacuation of Members of Congress, command posts, rally points, casualty collection points, and egress routes. Further, the respondent found the layout of the Capitol Building very confusing because the officer did not typically work inside that building specifically. Figure 19 illustrates the size of the large crowd that officers encountered during the January 6 attack.

**Figure 19: Crowd in Front of the Inaugural Stage on the West Side of the Capitol Building on January 6, 2021**



Source: U.S. Capitol Police. | GAO-22-104829

**Need for more realistic training.** Some respondents expressed that the Capitol Police training should be more realistic. Specifically, 46 respondents indicated that the quality of the training should be improved

by making it more realistic. Generally, these respondents commented that too much of their training is online based and that they want more practical, or scenario-based, training. Several respondents commented on the annual use of force training, which is required as part of the biannual firearms requalification. For example, one respondent indicated that this training consists of 10 to 15 slides on the use of force policy and landmark case law relevant to use of force, and that this training has not been updated recently. Another respondent stated, “Our training is largely online, which utilizes written SOP’s [standard operating procedures] or videos, followed by short multiple choice quizzes. The actual physical application of force is far different from reading about it.”

Several other respondents suggested that the Capitol Police use role players to make the training more realistic. For example, one respondent stated that the Capitol Police could use role players to conduct trainings on Capitol Hill during congressional recesses. Another respondent stated that the Capitol Police could conduct large-scale mock protest exercises with role players and use of crowd control devices, similar to the training for active shooter scenarios.

**Other improvements for training.** In addition to the suggestions previously discussed, 100 respondents offered other suggestions to improve training. For example:

- Thirty-one respondents suggested topics for additional training, including defensive tactics (e.g., hand-to-hand combat, close quarter fighting, self-defense, and martial arts), first aid and emergency medicine, incident management, leadership, and de-escalation strategies.
- Ten respondents suggested that the Capitol Police conduct more training with other law enforcement agencies and the National Guard. For example, one respondent stated that the Capitol Police should allow its officers to work with other agencies, such as the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department, U.S. Park Police, and U.S. Secret Service, during training and real-world events because it would help officers learn about various challenges they may face and will improve consistency and comradery between agencies. Capitol Police officials stated that it is difficult for the department to schedule joint training with other federal law enforcement agencies. The officials noted that the frequency of such training is limited by both the Capitol Police’s ability to free up officers to take such training, as well as by the number of training slots offered by other agencies. However, the officials also stated that since the January 6 attack, they have

conducted more trainings in coordination with the U.S. Park Police, U.S. Secret Service, and the D.C. National Guard to better prepare for future events.

- Ten respondents suggested that the Capitol Police should allow officers to train within the Capitol complex, including the Capitol Building. For example, one respondent suggested that there be Hill-wide training days, where the Capitol complex is used to conduct exercises for worst-case scenarios such as the January 6 attack and that these days could take place in the summer, when Congress is out of session and staff can be restricted for periods of time. Capitol Police officials stated training inside the building would be ideal for officer familiarity and planning purposes when civil disturbances or other threats happen on the Capitol complex. However, the officials added that they are not generally able to train inside the Capitol Building, due in part to the nature of the daily congressional work occurring there. The officials stated they use alternative locations and other agencies' facilities for training whenever available.
- Nine respondents suggested that there be more joint training across units within the Capitol Police, such as CDU training with CERT and other specialty units. According to the Capitol Police in October 2021, the department had recently sent CERT officers to CDU training to help familiarize them with CDU operations.

### Suggestions Related to Equipment

Respondents expressed various concerns and suggestions related to equipment, including the need for more protective equipment and less-lethal force equipment.

**Need for more protective equipment and easier access to equipment.** Many respondents expressed that more protective equipment is needed and should be more readily accessible. Specifically, 108 respondents commented that more protective equipment is needed, including helmets, riot gear, and shields. Some officers noted that their gear was old or of poor quality and that it was difficult to move around in the hard gear. For example, one respondent stated that some of the Capitol Police's riot gear is 20 years old and is handed down from officer to officer over time. Several respondents also suggested that better carrier vests and belts were needed to hold more items. Further, 20 respondents stated that Capitol Police equipment needs to be better positioned, as some of it was not readily accessible to them during the January 6 attack.

**Need for more less-lethal force equipment.** Many respondents expressed that more less-lethal force equipment (and the related training to use such force) are needed. Specifically, 89 respondents suggested that the Capitol Police needed more officers who are trained and equipped on less-lethal force, including chemical and kinetic impact munitions.

Several respondents commented that they were not all equipped with a baton or chemical spray during the January 6 attack. While several respondents suggested that members of the CDU specifically needed more training and access to less-lethal force, other respondents suggested that such capabilities should be available to more officers generally. Further, several respondents noted that there was a need for more chemical spray. For example, three respondents stated that the chemical spray canisters used on January 6, 2021, were small and ran out quickly.

### Concerns with the Department

Many respondents expressed concerns with various organizational aspects of the Capitol Police, such as frustration with leadership, attrition, and low morale. Specifically, 151 respondents identified concerns and suggestions related to leadership. For example, 99 respondents indicated that there had not been sufficient communication from leadership on January 6, 2021, or that there was a general lack of leadership that day. Several respondents noted that there had been limited or no communication from Capitol Police leadership to front-line officers before and during the attack. For example, one respondent had not seen or received guidance from Capitol Police supervisors for over 7 hours once the attack started and, instead, operated under the command of a Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department sergeant who had helped to organize the defense of the area.

Some respondents also expressed general concerns with leadership following the attack. Specifically, 55 respondents commented that leadership needed to be changed or otherwise be improved. In addition, 13 respondents criticized the Capitol Police's promotion process, several of whom stated that the promotion process resulted in individuals being promoted who lacked significant operational experience. Some respondents (32) suggested that leadership take more training on leadership skills, incident management, and crowd control. Further, some respondents (33) expressed a concern that leadership does not support them.

Several respondents stated that there was low morale and growing attrition within the department or that they had been overworked. Several respondents stated that morale was low at the department. For example, one respondent noted that morale has been low since the attack and stated that “many feel the protection they provided the members, injuries sustained, and deaths were all in vain leaving many to wonder if they would put themselves [sic] down in a situation such as the s6th [sic] again.” Another respondent noted that many officers have been leaving the department since the attack, and added that “As somebody who values my life I cannot see myself staying on [sic] a department that does not care about their employees enough to implement real change and additionally does not value what they do here.” Another respondent stated that since the attack, officers had been working 6 or 7 days a week, doing 12- to 16-hour shifts.

Capitol Police officials stated that attrition was up in fiscal year 2021 following the January 6 attack. Specifically, whereas 90 to 120 officers typically retire or resign each year, 145 officers retired, resigned, died, or converted to civilian (nonofficer) positions in fiscal year 2021.<sup>60</sup> Further, in January 2022, the Capitol Police Chief stated during hearings before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch that continuing staffing challenges following the January 6 attack have impacted the morale of the department. For example, the Chief stated that the department was understaffed by over 425 officers. The chief stated that these challenges have led to an increase in mandatory overtime requirements (i.e., requiring officers to work overtime hours beyond their regular scheduled hours), which the chief noted added stress to a workforce already stretched thin.

### Suggestions Related to Information- and Intelligence-sharing

Many respondents wanted intelligence information to be shared and improved. Specifically, 190 respondents expressed concerns or made suggestions related to information-sharing. Of these respondents, 159 indicated that information, intelligence, and related guidance had not

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<sup>60</sup>In addition to those that have retired or resigned, three officers died following the attack. According to the Capitol Police, Officer Brian D. Sicknick passed away on January 7, 2021, related to injuries sustained while on duty during the January 6 attack. Officer Howard Liebengood passed away on January 9, 2021, which his family has stated was a suicide related to trauma suffered during the attack. Officer William (Billy) Evans passed away on April 2, 2021, while protecting the Capitol complex from a vehicle attack.

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been shared with them (either adequately or at all), and some stated that such information should be better shared in the future. For example, one respondent noted that if officers “had any information on the morning of the 6th aside from “Prepare for a long day” they would have had a different mindset when the group approached.”

Further, 56 respondents expressed the view that they had received conflicting information from senior officials on the nature of the threat or that the Capitol Police underestimated the threat. For example, one respondent noted that the department needs to take threats more seriously. The same respondent stated that some officers were surprised when they were sent home the morning of January 6, 2021, after their midnight shift because they had been expecting to be asked to work longer that day to help with the demonstration.

Eighteen respondents stated that they had anticipated the threat that day on the basis of their own sources, such as social media, the news, and friends from other agencies. One respondent stated that the guidance and information received during the preshift briefing was genuinely to the best of the supervisors’ knowledge. Respondents also identified suggested areas in which intelligence could be improved, such as obtaining a better intelligence-sharing platform, putting an intelligence unit in the field during demonstrations, and reviewing open source information.<sup>61</sup>

### Suggestions Related to Physical Security

Some respondents suggested ways to enhance physical security. Specifically, 46 respondents commented that physical security needs to be enhanced. Respondents made suggestions for improvement, such as the creation of a permanent fence, installing stronger doors and windows, adding more substantive barriers (other than bike racks), adding more closed-circuit television cameras, and installing fencing with screening checkpoints. For example, one respondent stated that “There needs to be more permanent obstacles on the Hill that slows down rioters, not temporary bike racks that end up being used as weapons against the officers.” Another respondent noted that the department should strengthen the doors and windows of the Capitol Building and all congressional office buildings, and that in the past, “aesthetics and the

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<sup>61</sup>We have ongoing work on information- and intelligence-sharing related to the January 6 attack that we anticipate issuing later in 2022.

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historical nature of infrastructure has trumped security needs.” Further, another respondent commented that contractors who are in charge of fixing alarms and magnetic locks should be held accountable for poor performance, as magnetic locks failed during the attack.

### Suggestions Related to Planning

Many respondents identified the need to improve planning. Specifically, 159 respondents discussed concerns or made suggestions to improve planning. For example, 41 stated that they were not given or made aware of any plans in preparation for January 6, 2021. Additionally, 126 respondents indicated that they were not given or made aware of pre-operational guidance related to crowd control or other operational issues that day. Further, 43 respondents identified additional suggestions to improve planning, such as the need for better contingency planning to know what to do when things go wrong. For example, one respondent stated that the department should have “clear objectives for different areas of the complex on what is needed to be protected, what routes we should keep clear, where to take injured people, [and] general ideas of possible actions.” The same respondent also noted that while there cannot be a plan for all situations, such planning would help officers prioritize and make necessary adjustments during a crisis.

Additionally, 11 respondents noted that there was no clear plan on which posts could be closed or abandoned so that officers could go help during an emergency. For example, one respondent stated that many officers did not know whether they could leave the location of their daily assignment to help respond at the Capitol. Further, two respondents suggested that the Capitol Police set up predesignated rallying points where officers can gather to get information.

### Suggestions Related to Officer Workforce

Some respondents suggested that the Capitol Police should hire more officers to help the Capitol Police be more prepared in the future. Specifically, 35 respondents indicated that the Capitol Police was understaffed and needed to hire more officers. For example, one respondent stated that the department only staffs for the purposes of covering all required posts at which officers stand guard. The respondent added that the department needs to allow time for officers to take training. Capitol Police officials told us in October 2021 that it can be difficult to send officers to training because doing so would require that another officer cover the post instead. The officials added that the covering of

such posts may result in the payment of overtime for the other officer if there are not enough officers available to cover in the department, which can be expensive and strain the department's resources.

### Other Comments

**Difficult situation.** While respondents identified potential improvements that could be made, as noted above, 77 respondents also recognized that the events on January 6, 2021, presented an inherently difficult situation. Of these, 49 respondents noted that the large number of demonstrators presented a challenge. For example, one respondent noted that even the most trained group of officers would have been overtaken by the sheer size of the crowd. The same respondent added that, "Even if we actually had 2000 officers at the Capitol Building that day, which we didn't, it would not have been enough to secure the whole building. Even when the officers retreated and tried to hold doors, the rioters still broke in through the windows. There just weren't enough officers to cover every possible entry point."

Further, 38 respondents noted that the chaotic nature of the attack impacted their response efforts, or that no amount of training or available Capitol Police officers could have helped the Capitol Police to adequately cover such a large complex during the attack. For example, one respondent stated that the officer's CDU platoon got separated during the attack, which prevented them from working together as a group.

**Praise for the actions of fellow officers.** Respondents praised the actions of their fellow officers on January 6, 2021. Specifically, 45 respondents praised the actions of their fellow Capitol Police officers and immediate supervisors. Several officers praised officers' actions that day generally, and several respondents identified specific officers who displayed heroism that day. For example, one respondent stated, "At least in my experience, I had officials who weren't afraid to do what needed to happen and stepped up and gave us directions after not getting anything from the higher ups." Further, 24 respondents also praised the actions of officers from other law enforcement agencies, particularly the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. For example, one respondent stated, "Having other agencies who were better equipped and provided more manpower helped to slow down the rate of people breaching the building and restored order as quickly as we could. Without that, the department would not have been able to hold off the mob ourselves."



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## The Capitol Police Are Taking Some Steps to Better Prepare Officers, but Additional Opportunities Exist to Further Enhance Preparedness

The Capitol Police has taken actions to better prepare officers and address other issues following the January 6 attack, including actions related to the use of force, equipment and training, and departmental concerns.<sup>62</sup> The department is also taking actions to address recommendations from its employees and the Office of Inspector General. However, the Capitol Police may be missing some opportunities to better prepare officers.

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### Use of Force

The Capitol Police has taken several actions to clarify the use of force, following the January 6 attack. For example, the Capitol Police issued additional guidance to officers on January 10, 2021, related to the use of force policy. The guidance reminded officers of some important components of the department's use of force policy. For example, the guidance reiterated that officers may use less-lethal force (e.g., batons and chemical spray) to protect themselves and others, as well as arrest, expel, or eject unauthorized persons illegally found in restricted areas of the Capitol Building or other congressional buildings. The guidance also reiterated the department's use of lethal force policy.

In addition, the department conducted about 50 in-person roll call discussions, beginning in March 2021 through July 2021. During these discussions, the department's Office of General Counsel provided a general overview of the use of force policy, answered officer questions concerning the policy, and discussed specific scenarios that officers may encounter. Capitol Police officials stated in July 2021 that these discussions addressed myths and misconceptions related to the use of force, such as whether the department will provide lawyers for officers in

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<sup>62</sup>We have issued other reports and are conducting ongoing work that address other actions the Capitol Police has taken to address issues related to intelligence- and information-sharing, physical security, and planning. See [GAO-21-105255](#) and [GAO-22-105001](#).

the event there is civil litigation.<sup>63</sup> These discussions were conducted as part of mandatory pre-shift meetings, and as of July 2021, officials stated that nearly all officers had attended one of these discussions. One respondent to our survey indicated that the use of force briefing in the weeks after the attack was helpful in restoring faith that the department will back an officer, as long as the actions were legally justified.

Other respondents felt that additional clarity on the use of force was still needed. For example, among officers who completed their survey after July 2021 (nearly all of the discussions on the use of force had occurred from March through July 2021), four respondents stated that the use of force policy was unclear, nine respondents stated that the department discouraged use of force or that officers were hesitant to use force, and four respondents stated that department optics played a role in security-related decisions.<sup>64</sup> One respondent noted that fear of being disciplined for using force was a reoccurring topic that came up after the attack. Another respondent reported receiving some training related to the use of force after the attack but that this training was general and that more direction from leadership was needed.

The Capitol Police's use of force policy is designed to be applied in all law enforcement situations involving the Capitol complex and authorizes officers to use the level of force that is objectively reasonable. However, some of our survey respondents expressed a need to clarify the level of force that is appropriate during riots and violent situations, and some respondents felt discouraged by management to use force even when justified. In October 2021, Capitol Police officials stated to us that misconceptions related to the use of force have been persistent both before and after the January 6 attack. The officials added that they believe the roll call discussions were useful in addressing these misconceptions but also noted that holding such discussions on a regular basis would be too time-consuming.

The Capitol Police's discussions with officers on the use of force policy following the January 6 attack are a positive step. However, according to our survey results, such discussions may not have addressed underlying

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<sup>63</sup>Further, in October 2021, the Capitol Police issued a two-page document to its officers that addressed five common questions that officers asked during the discussions. Capitol Police officials stated that the department will provide lawyers for officers in the event there is civil litigation.

<sup>64</sup>Our survey was open from June 1 through September 1, 2021.

factors related to potential officer hesitancy to use force. For example, as noted above, some respondents who completed their surveys after these discussions after July 2021 indicated that they felt additional clarity on the use of force was still needed. Further, following these discussions, the Capitol Police did not obtain formal feedback from officers on their satisfaction with the discussion and sense of confidence in knowing when and how to apply force in the future. However, Capitol Police officials stated in August 2021 that they had received informal feedback from officers and that officers appreciated the opportunity to ask questions about real-life scenarios.

Ensuring that officers have an accurate understanding of the department's expectations and policies related to the use of force is important because the misapplication of the policy could have deadly consequences. Federal internal control standards state that management should define objectives—as applied here, the expectations for the use of force—so that they are understood at all levels of the entity.<sup>65</sup>

Implementing an effective use of force policy requires that both management and officers have a clear understanding of the agency's use of force expectations. Taking actions to better understand officers' comprehension of the department's use of force policy, and making changes to policy, guidance, and training, as needed, will help ensure that management and officer expectations are aligned.

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## Equipment and Training

The Capitol Police has taken some actions related to increasing or improving equipment and training, but has not taken other actions, due to other priorities or challenges.

### Equipment

The Emergency Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021, appropriated about \$2.6 million to the Capitol Police to fund various civil disturbance unit equipment and physical barriers.<sup>66</sup> The Capitol Police reported in June 2021 that it was working to develop a policy that addresses all procedures regarding equipment standards and life cycle management based on manufacturer recommendations. As of October

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<sup>65</sup>GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: September 2014).

<sup>66</sup>Pub. L. No. 117-31, 135 Stat. 309, 312 (July 30, 2021).

2021, the Capitol Police has obtained additional rectangular 4-foot shields, round shields, compressed air launchers, kinetic impact munitions, chemical munitions, and diversionary devices since the January 6 attack. The department has also ordered additional less-lethal 40 mm launchers, compressed air launchers, sets of protective equipment (e.g., gloves and gas masks), helmets, and long riot batons, all of which officials stated they had not yet received due to supply chain delays.

#### Less-lethal force training

Capitol Police officials reported that as of June 2021, an additional 24 officers have completed training courses related to less-lethal launchers since the attack, and seven CDU instructors were trained to teach use of hand-thrown chemical and kinetic impact munitions. The Capitol Police also stated in June 2021 that it was in the process of developing guidance on the deployment and staging for less-lethal weapons during CDU operations.

#### Crowd control training and CDU

In March 2021, the Capitol Police updated the lesson plan for the crowd control training course that all officers take. The new lesson plan included new learning objectives related to identifying the justification for the use of force and demonstrating the proper use of a crowd control shield. Further, Capitol Police officials also reported in October 2021 that the department's training instructors have consulted with agencies locally and nationally to identify current best practices in crowd control. The officials added that when the instructors identify a new tactic that will enhance response capabilities for the CDU, that tactic would be added to the training in the future.

Capitol Police officials reported in June 2021 that the department was in the process of developing a directive on the CDU that will formalize the unit's mission, objectives, roles, responsibilities, and training standards. Officials stated that as of July 2021, an additional 77 officers had received their initial CDU training. Further, as of October 2021, Capitol Police officials stated that the department is seeking to incentivize participation in the CDU by designating it a specialty assignment, for which personnel rostered to the CDU would receive an annual lump-sum payment.

However, Capitol Police officials stated in July 2021 that their current focus is on improving the training for members of the CDU and that they

did not have plans to expand or modify crowd control training for non-CDU officers, such as by providing more crowd control refresher training.

The Capitol Police's Human Capital Strategic Plan for 2021 through 2025 states that the department should train and develop officers to ensure a ready, able, and professional workforce.<sup>67</sup> Further, federal internal control standards state that management should ensure that personnel possess and maintain a level of competence that allows them to accomplish their assigned responsibilities.<sup>68</sup> As previously noted, more than half of the officers who responded to our survey (180 of 315), which included both CDU and non-CDU officers, expressed a need to increase and improve the quality of training. Although the CDU is the key group responsible for responding to large-scale demonstrations, all Capitol Police officers may be called upon to help with crowd control in emergency situations, as demonstrated during the January 6 attack. The Capitol Police's ongoing efforts to develop a training standard for the CDU may address training challenges for members of the unit, but such efforts will not address the crowd control training needs of non-CDU officers. Enhancing crowd control training for all Capitol Police officers, including non-CDU officers, will help ensure that all officers are better prepared in the future.

#### Increasing frequency of in-person training

Capitol Police officials stated in October 2021 that offering more in-person and scenario-based training is challenging because this training requires that officers be taken off of their posts. Doing so may result in other officers receiving overtime pay to cover the post in addition to their normally scheduled hours. Capitol Police officials stated in July 2021 that they plan on increasing the number of new officers hired every year over the next 2 years to help address attrition and to further grow the department. For example, in fiscal year 2022, the Capitol Police is planning to hire and train up to 288 new officers, compared with the 120 new officers the department typically hires each year. The officials also stated that this growth may allow the department to better cover posts so that more officers can attend training in the long term.

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<sup>67</sup>U.S. Capitol Police, *Human Capital Strategic Plan, 2021-2025* (Washington, D.C.).

<sup>68</sup>GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: September 2014).

Our guide for assessing strategic training and development efforts states that agencies should have flexibilities in scheduling employees' time related to training and developmental efforts.<sup>69</sup> Agencies may also adjust employees' work schedules to accommodate educational endeavors, as long as it will not unduly interfere with work accomplishment nor lead to additional personnel costs. The guide also notes that the delivery of training programs should also recognize specific job processes and procedures in the agency as well as the agency's general organizational culture. As previously noted, our survey found that some respondents felt that Capitol Police training should be more realistic and in person to help better prepare them to fulfill their law enforcement duties. While there may be challenges in providing more in-person training to all officers, the Capitol Police must balance the need to staff its officers to posts to perform their law enforcement duties with the need to train its officers so that they can effectively accomplish those duties. Enhancing crowd control training for Capitol Police officers by providing more realistic training will help ensure that all officers are better prepared in the future.

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### Concerns with the department and morale

The Capitol Police has taken some actions to address officers' concerns with the department (i.e., concerns with leadership, attrition, promotion, and morale) following the January 6 attack but may not be fully addressing underlying factors.

Some of these actions are being funded by the Emergency Security Supplemental Appropriations Act.<sup>70</sup> For example, the Act appropriated about \$37.5 million to the Capitol Police for salaries, of which \$3.6 million was to fund retention bonuses, and \$6.9 million was to fund hazard pay for employees of the Capitol Police, which Capitol Police officials stated they hoped would help combat the higher-than-normal attrition the department is facing following the attack.<sup>71</sup> The Act also provides funding for initiatives related to mental health, such as about \$1.4 million to fund the creation of a wellness program to be named the Howard C. Liebengood Center for Wellness, after a Capitol Police officer who

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<sup>69</sup>GAO, *Human Capital: A Guide for Assessing Strategic Training and Development Efforts in the Federal Government*, [GAO-04-546G](#) (Washington, D.C.: March 2004).

<sup>70</sup>Pub. L. No. 117-31, 135 Stat. 309 (July 30, 2021).

<sup>71</sup>Pub. L. No. 117-31, 135 Stat. 309, 311 (July 30, 2021).

reportedly died by suicide after the January 6 attack. The Act also provides funding to reimburse expenses related to providing peer-to-peer and group counseling services.<sup>72</sup>

Further, in hearings before the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch in January 2022, the Capitol Police Chief stated that the department has strategies to address staffing challenges. In the long term, the chief stated that the department intends to hire approximately 280 police officers each year for the next 3 years. The Chief noted that the department intends to contract security officers to staff posts the department has identified as suitable for security officer coverages (e.g., interior posts where individuals have already been screened by Capitol Police officers at building entrances). The Chief also noted that the department is exploring increasing staffing levels by re-hiring annuitants and hiring lateral transfers from other law enforcement agencies.

Capitol Police officials stated that the department has faced long-term morale issues. As shown in table 4, the Capitol Police’s employee viewpoint surveys in recent years indicate that about 50 percent to 60 percent of employees who completed the Capitol Police’s survey were generally satisfied or would recommend their organization as a good place to work.<sup>73</sup>

**Table 4: Results for the U.S. Capitol Police’s Employee Viewpoint Survey, 2016 through 2020**

Year	I recommend the U.S. Capitol Police as a good place to work. (strongly agree or agree)	Considering everything, how satisfied are you with the U.S. Capitol Police? (strongly agree or agree)
2016	57% (320 of 558 respondents)	52% (282 of 540 respondents)

<sup>72</sup>Pub. L. No. 117-31, § 301, 135 Stat. 309, 312 (July 30, 2021).

<sup>73</sup>The United States Office of Personnel Management has conducted the annual federal employee viewpoint survey of federal government employees to measure employees’ perceptions of whether, and to what extent, conditions characterizing successful organizations are present in their agencies. As a legislative branch agency, the Capitol Police does not take the Office of Personnel Management’s federal employee viewpoint survey. However, the department conducted its own surveys in 2016, 2017, and 2019 that included many of the same questions. The U.S. Capitol Police’s survey response rates ranged between 23 percent and 43 percent (i.e., 30 percent in 2016, 23 percent in 2017, and 43 percent in 2019, respectively), but response rates may not be comparable between years because different methods may have been used to calculate annual response rates (e.g., number who initiated versus number who completed). On the basis of our review of the survey’s summary reports, we determined these results are not generalizable to all U.S. Capitol Police officers.

Year	I recommend the U.S. Capitol Police as a good place to work. (strongly agree or agree)	Considering everything, how satisfied are you with the U.S. Capitol Police? (strongly agree or agree)
2017	58% (256 of 444 respondents)	53% (216 of 407 respondents)
2018	n/a	n/a
2019	61% (539 of 885 respondents)	58% (486 of 844 respondents)
2020	n/a	n/a

Source: GAO analysis of Capitol Police information. | GAO-22-104829

Note: The number of respondents varies by question because not all respondents answered every question. The U.S. Capitol Police’s survey response rates ranged between 23 percent and 43 percent (i.e., 30 percent in 2016, 23 percent in 2017, and 43 percent in 2019, respectively), but response rates may not be comparable between years because different methods may have been used to calculate annual response rates (e.g., number who initiated versus number who completed). On the basis of our review of the survey’s summary reports, we determined that these results are not generalizable to all U.S. Capitol Police officers. The U.S. Capitol Police did not conduct employee viewpoint surveys in 2018 and 2020.

Further, the Capitol Police’s prior employee viewpoint survey results identified themes that were similar to our survey results. For example, the Capitol Police 2019 Employee Viewpoint Survey Analysis report included an analysis of 365 written responses conducted by a third-party vendor that identified major themes for improvement. The themes touched upon morale, promotion, leadership, and training.

- **Morale.** According to the Capitol Police 2019 Employee Viewpoint Survey Analysis report, the item most mentioned in the narrative portion of the survey was low morale. The analysis stated that multiple factors were expressed that related to this outcome, including concerns related to first-line supervisors (e.g., lack of respect and emotional intelligence). The 2016 and 2017 analyses also identified morale as an issue, citing favoritism and the absence of leadership as potential causes.
- **Promotions.** The Capitol Police 2019 analysis report also found that officers expressed the belief that promotions are not based on merit but instead on who you know and who likes you, which results in the perception of the lack of fair treatment, transparency, and consistent leadership. The Capitol Police 2016 and 2017 analysis reports also identified the promotion process as an issue, citing the perception of bias and poor management of the system.
- **Leadership.** The Capitol Police 2019 analysis report also stated that employees expressed a concern that they wanted to see more of their senior management. The analysis added that doing so would help officers feel they are appreciated, seen, and heard and help ensure that the senior management does not forget what it is like to be an officer. The Capitol Police 2016 and 2017 analysis reports also



identified issues related to leadership, including lack of communication.

- **Training.** The Capitol Police 2019 analysis report also identified training as a top issue, noting that officers want “hands-on” training rather than online training. Officers also expressed the need for tactical training, including how to handle emergency situations and security threats. The survey also stated that officers believed there was a need for supervisors to receive leadership training to help middle managers obtain skills needed to support their officers. The Capitol Police 2016 and 2017 analysis reports also identified training as an issue, citing the desire for more hands-on training and supervisor training.

Capitol Police officials stated that the department did not conduct its employee survey in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is planning to conduct a survey in late 2021. The department had planned to deploy the survey in October and November 2021 and to prepare a report on the findings by the end of January 2022. The department added questions to the survey regarding specific workplace matters related to the events of January 6 attack. However, as of January 2022, Capitol Police officials stated that their survey had been delayed, and was opened in late December 2021 and would be open through the end of February 2022. The officials added that a third-party vendor will be analyzing the narrative responses to the survey, but Capitol Police officials did not provide an expected timeframe for this analysis.

We have previously reported that engaged employees take pride in their work; are passionate about and energized by what they do; are committed to the organization, the mission, and their job; and are more likely to put forth extra effort to get the job done.<sup>74</sup> Key components of employee engagement include employees’ perceptions of the integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness of leadership and their supervisors.<sup>75</sup> However, as previously noted, many of the officers responding to our

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<sup>74</sup>GAO, *Federal Workforce: Additional Analysis and Sharing of Promising Practices Could Improve Employee Engagement and Performance*, [GAO-15-585](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 14, 2015).

<sup>75</sup>These components are included as part of the Office of Personnel Management’s Employee Engagement Index from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, which covers organizational conditions that lead to feelings of engagement, which in turn lead to engagement behaviors, such as discretionary effort, and then to optimum organizational performance. For more information on employee engagement, see [GAO-15-585](#).

survey (151 of 315) expressed frustration with leadership following the January 6 attack, and some officers (33 of 315) expressed the perception that leadership did not support them. This was consistent with prior Capitol Police employee viewpoint survey results.<sup>76</sup>

Capitol Police officials told us in October 2021 that they valued the input their officers provided in our survey as the department seeks to address challenges following the January 6 attack. While the Capitol Police has taken some actions to address officers' concerns, given the severity of the events that day and the likely long-standing nature of the concerns, matters may not be resolved quickly. Federal internal control standards state that management should use quality information in a timely manner.<sup>77</sup> In light of our survey findings and the Capitol Police's forthcoming employee viewpoint survey analysis, there is an opportunity for the department to identify underlying causes for employee concerns. While response rates to both surveys have not been generalizable to all Capitol Police officers, the information they provide offers perspectives that could help the department further understand the extent to which such issues are reflective of long-standing challenges within the Capitol Police. Further, developing an action plan to address these underlying causes will help the department to address these concerns in a timely manner and, in turn, will help ensure that its officers are engaged and effective in performing their duties.

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## Actions to Address Recommendations from Capitol Police Employees and the Office of Inspector General

The Capitol Police has also taken actions to address recommendations from its employees and the Office of Inspector General following the January 6 attack.

The department conducted an internal review of 49 after action reports submitted by employees following the attack. Capitol Police officials

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<sup>76</sup>We estimate a 20-percent response rate to our survey, which is calculated out of the 1,782 officers who were still working at the department at the time of our survey. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. See appendix I for more information on how we calculated our response rate. According to Capitol Police payroll data and information, 1,482 officers were on duty at the Capitol complex at some point on January 6, 2021.

<sup>77</sup>[GAO-14-704G](#)

stated in July 2021 that leadership would take actions to address recommendations from employees as appropriate.<sup>78</sup> As of November 2021, the department reported making 199 improvements in response to the January 6 attack.<sup>79</sup> Illustrative examples of actions the department reported taking that we identified as being related to employee suggestions include:

- obtaining more portable medical decontamination bags, which can assist officers in flushing out chemical irritants (e.g., tear gas, pepper spray, and bear spray);
- ordering electronic control devices and obtaining training from an outside vendor to train Capitol Police instructors on how to safely operate and deploy the devices;
- issuing work cell phones to all officers, which are used to share intelligence bulletins and other information with officers; and
- entering into an oral agreement with United States Park Police for mutual aid with their Horse Mounted Unit.

In addition, the Capitol Police has also taken actions to address recommendations from the Office of Inspector General, which issued eight reports as of December 2021 as part of its review of the events surrounding the January 6 attack. As of February 2022, the Capitol Police reported that it had closed 39 of the 104 recommendations. Illustrative examples of actions taken to close these recommendations include:

- sending 28 officers to a 5-day public order management course;
- revising policies and procedures to provide guidance on deployment and staging for less-lethal devices (e.g., compressed air launchers) during CDU operations; and
- pre-staging shields at doors and barricades before operational events.

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## Conclusions

The events of January 6, 2021 raised important questions about whether the Capitol Police is adequately prepared to respond effectively and

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<sup>78</sup>The Department's Emergency Planning Section reviewed and summarized the after action reports from employees, and then presented the summary to leadership.

<sup>79</sup>This list of improvements was provided to the Office of Inspector General. We did not validate the list.

efficiently in the current threat environment. The department has taken some positive first steps, such as conducting one-time discussions on use of force with officers following the attack and using supplemental appropriations to combat the higher-than-normal attrition, but needs to better understand and address potential officer hesitancy to use force, concerns with the department, and morale. While the department has provided more equipment and less-lethal force training following the attack, the department should continue to improve current training to better prepare officers to deal with demonstrators, such as providing more refresher crowd control training and realistic training to all officers.

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## Recommendations for Executive Action

We are making five recommendations to the Capitol Police:

- The Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police should take additional actions to better understand officers' comprehension of the department's expectations and policies related to the use of force, including identifying underlying causes related to potential officer hesitancy to use force. (Recommendation 1)
- The Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police should make changes, as appropriate, to policy, guidance, and training to address findings from actions taken to better understand officers' comprehension of the department's expectations and policies related to the use of force. (Recommendation 2)
- The Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police should take actions to provide more refresher crowd control training to prepare all officers, including those who are not part of the Civil Disturbance Unit, for large-scale and potentially violent demonstrations. (Recommendation 3)
- The Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police should take actions to provide officers with more realistic training, such as in person and hands-on training. (Recommendation 4)
- The Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police should identify underlying factors related to employees' concerns with the department following the January 6 attack and develop an action plan to address these issues. (Recommendation 5)

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## Agency Comment and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to the Capitol Police for review and comment. In its comments, reproduced in appendix IV, the Capitol Police agreed with our recommendations and noted that the department is taking steps to develop actions to implement the recommendations. The Capitol Police also provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to congressional leadership, appropriate committees, and the Chief of the U.S. Capitol Police. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <https://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff members have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-8777 or [goodwing@gao.gov](mailto:goodwing@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix V.



Gretta L. Goodwin  
Director, Homeland Security and Justice

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*List of Requesters*

The Honorable Gary C. Peters  
Chairman  
The Honorable Rob Portman  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar  
Chairwoman  
The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Rules and Administration  
United States Senate

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
Chairperson  
The Honorable Rodney Davis  
Ranking Member  
Committee on House Administration  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform  
House of Representatives

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The Honorable Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senate

The Honorable Jake Auchincloss  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Cindy Axne  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Nanette Diaz Barragán  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Ami Bera, M.D.  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Donald S. Beyer, Jr.  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Sanford Bishop  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester  
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The Honorable Carolyn Bourdeaux  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Jamaal Bowman  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Anthony G. Brown  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Cheri Bustos  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Salud Carbajal  
House of Representatives

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The Honorable Sean Casten  
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The Honorable Joe Courtney  
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The Honorable Angie Craig  
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The Honorable Jason Crow  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Sharice L. Davids  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Danny K. Davis  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Madeleine Dean  
House of Representatives



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House of Representatives

The Honorable Diana DeGette  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Suzan DelBene  
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The Honorable Mark DeSaulnier  
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The Honorable Debbie Dingell  
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The Honorable Lloyd Doggett  
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The Honorable Lizzie Fletcher  
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The Honorable Bill Foster  
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The Honorable Lois Frankel  
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The Honorable Ruben Gallego  
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The Honorable John Garamendi  
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The Honorable Jimmy Gomez  
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The Honorable Al Green  
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The Honorable David Trone  
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The Honorable Lauren Underwood  
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The Honorable Nydia Velázquez  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Bonnie Watson Coleman  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Peter Welch  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Nikema Williams  
House of Representatives

The Honorable Frederica S. Wilson  
House of Representatives

The Honorable John Yarmuth  
House of Representatives

# Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

We were asked to provide a broad and comprehensive overview of events leading up to, during, and following the Capitol attack. In response, we are issuing a series of reports examining the preparation, intelligence gathering, coordination, and response related to the January 6, 2021 attack.<sup>1</sup> This fourth report is focused on Capitol Police officer preparation, specifically:

1. How the Capitol Police prepared officers prior to the January 6 attack to use force and maintain crowd control during large-scale demonstrations;
2. Capitol Police officers' reported use of force during the January 6 attack;
3. Perspectives of 315 Capitol Police officers who responded to our survey regarding their preparedness for events that took place during the January 6 attack; and
4. Changes the Capitol Police has made to better prepare officers going forward and additional opportunities for improvement.

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## Objective 1

To describe how the Capitol Police prepares its officers to use force and maintain crowd control during large-scale demonstrations prior to the January 6 attack, we reviewed use of force and crowd control policies, procedures, and directives. For example, we reviewed the Capitol Police's October 2016 use of force directive, as well as policies related to demonstration activities, securing the Capitol complex during active threats, security breaches, use of compressed air launchers, and utilization of the Containment and Emergency Response Team (CERT),

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<sup>1</sup>We have issued three prior reports on the January 6 attack. See GAO, *Capitol Attack: Special Event Designations Could Have Been Requested for January 6, 2021, but Not All DHS Guidance Is Clear*, [GAO-21-105255](#) (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 9, 2021); and *Capitol Attack: The Capitol Police Need Clearer Emergency Procedures and a Comprehensive Security Risk Assessment Process*, [GAO-22-105001](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 17, 2022). We also issued a sensitive report, see *Capitol Attack: Federal Agencies' Use of Open Source Data and Related Threat Products Prior to January 6, 2021*, [GAO-22-105256SU](#) (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 16, 2022).

among others. We also reviewed training materials (e.g., lesson plans and training slides) for use of force and crowd control tactics, including the initial training for U.S. Capitol Police officers receive at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, Capitol Police-provided training at the Capitol Police Training Academy, recertification requirements, and other mandatory training. Further, we interviewed officials that provide training, such as officials from the Training Services Bureau, the Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU), and CERT.

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## Objective 2

To describe the extent to which the Capitol Police officers reported using force during the January 6 attack, we gathered information on how Capitol Police officers report use of force incidents and how their supervisors and managers review these incidents to determine if the officers adhered to established policies, procedures, and training. We analyzed use of force reports (CP-315 reports) for January 6, 2021, to describe the amount and kinds of force used by officers (e.g., type of force, number of incidents, and reason for use). We also reviewed the reports to identify the outcomes of supervisors' reviews of these incidents, such as whether the use of force was justified. To assess the reliability of this information, we reviewed Capitol Police policies and procedures for reporting and reviewing use of force information and interviewed knowledgeable officials. We determined the information was sufficiently reliable for the purpose of summarizing summary information on the reported use of force by Capitol Police officers on January 6, 2021. We also conducted a site visit to the Capitol Building in July 2021 to observe Capitol Police operations and reviewed videos from Capitol Police cameras of recordings January 6, 2021.

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## Objective 3

To describe the perspectives of Capitol Police officers regarding their preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack, we conducted an electronic survey of all Capitol Police officers who were on duty at any point on January 6, 2021. On the basis of our interviews with Capitol Police officials, our prior work on law enforcement topics, and other information on the January 6 attack, we developed a survey to gather information from officers on their perspectives on training, policy, and guidance for use of force and crowd control, as well as any suggestions they have to improve officers' ability to respond to future events similar to the January 6 attack. Prior to deploying our survey, we



developed a draft survey and pretested it with three Capitol Police officers. We pretested the survey with these officers to ensure that (1) the questions were clear and unambiguous, (2) the terminology was used correctly, (3) the survey did not place an undue burden on officers, (4) the information could feasibly be obtained, and (5) the survey was comprehensive and unbiased. The process of developing the survey was iterative, in that we used the results of our pretest with one officer to modify the survey for the next officer in our pretest. We also had our survey instrument peer reviewed by an independent GAO survey specialist and made modifications based upon their recommendations prior to launching the survey.

We deployed our survey from June 1, 2021 to September 1, 2021, to all 1,782 officers who were still working at the Capitol Police at the time of our survey.<sup>2</sup> To increase participation in our survey, we requested that the Capitol Police, as well as the U.S. Capitol Police Labor Committee (officer union), send notifications to officers to encourage participation in our survey. We also sent five emails to remind officers to complete our survey. We estimate a 20-percent survey response rate following American Association of Public Opinion Research guidance. This rate represents a total of 315 officers who reported being on duty at the Capitol complex on January 6, 2021, as well as 44 officers who indicated that they were not on duty but completed our survey.<sup>3</sup> Although we include these 44 officers in our response rate following American Association of Public Opinion Research guidance, we do not include these officers' responses to our survey questions in our analysis.<sup>4</sup>

Up to 294 officers of the 1,782 to whom we sent surveys may have been out of scope (e.g., not working on January 6, 2021, no longer working for the Capitol Police, or on long-term leave). We could not verify this

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<sup>2</sup>We excluded seven officers whom we considered to be part of department leadership, such as Acting and Assistant Chiefs of Police. We also did not send our survey to 17 officers who had been on long-term medical leave on January 6, 2021, because these officers did not have active Capitol Police email addresses.

<sup>3</sup>We included partially completed surveys from respondents who did not indicate they were finished with the survey by answering the last question but either indicated that they were on duty at the Capitol complex on January 6, 2021, and did not answer any other questions, or answered all questions except for the two last open-ended questions. Twenty-four respondents fit into this "partially finished" category.

<sup>4</sup>We also removed from our analysis the portion of the population that could be identified as out of scope (i.e., officers who were not on duty at the Capitol complex on January 6, 2021) based on answers to survey questions.

because the officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of our respondents. If these officers were not available to answer the survey, the response rate could have been as high as 22 percent. Further, because the officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed our survey against those who did not, and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. Therefore, our set of survey respondents may be over or under representative of officers in important subgroups and may contain biases that we could not measure. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day; however, we believe that the responses provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack.

To help characterize respondent data in this report, we use modifiers (e.g., "most" and "several") to quantify the views of the 315 officers who completed our survey and reported being on duty on January 6, 2021. We define these modifiers as follows: (1) "most" officers represents at least 158 officers (which is more than 50 percent of the respondents); (2) "many" officers represents 63 to 157 officers (which is more than approximately 20 percent of respondents); (3) "some" officers represents 32 to 62 officers (which is more than approximately 10 percent of respondents); and (4) "several" officers represents at least three to 31 officers. To analyze the open-ended responses to our survey, two of our analysts coded officer responses, using various categories. Officer responses could be assigned multiple categories. One analyst initially coded the response, and a second analyst verified the coding.<sup>5</sup> When the analysts disagreed, they discussed the coding to develop a mutually agreed-upon coding.

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## Objective 4

To describe changes that the Capitol Police has made to better prepare officers to use force and maintain crowd control during large-scale demonstrations following the January 6 attack, we obtained and reviewed

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<sup>5</sup>Our open-ended questions were designed to be broad enough to allow respondents the ability to address a variety of topics of importance to them. Our analysis of the responses, which addressed a wide range of topics, focuses on the most common themes we identified across all open-ended questions. Because officers had discretion to address whatever topics they wanted in their open-ended responses, it is unknown whether respondents who did not address certain topics lacked an opinion related to that issue.

documentation on new or updated policy, procedures, and training on use of force and crowd control. We reviewed reports issued from February 2021 through October 2021 from the Capitol Police Office of the Inspector General and obtained information from the Capitol Police on actions the department is taking to address recommendations from the Office of the Inspector General. We also interviewed officials and obtained information from the Capitol Police on actions the department is taking to address concerns identified by the officers who completed our survey, such as issues related to use of force, training, equipment, and concerns with the department.

We also reviewed the results of Capitol Police employee viewpoint surveys for fiscal years 2016 through 2020.<sup>6</sup> To determine the reliability of survey data, we reviewed the methodology described in the reports. We determined that the data were reliable for the purpose of presenting summary results but that results are not generalizable to all U.S. Capitol Police officers, due to the surveys' response rates. To identify additional opportunities to better prepare officers to use force and maintain crowd control during large-scale events since the January 6 attack, we evaluated the Capitol Police's actions against criteria in the department's use of force policy and human capitol strategic plan, as well as our criteria for assessing strategic training and development efforts, federal internal control standards related to employee competence, using quality information, and defining objectives, and our prior work on employee engagement.<sup>7</sup>

We conducted this performance audit from February 2021 to March 2022 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that

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<sup>6</sup>The Capitol Police conducted three employee viewpoint surveys during this period (2016, 2017, and 2019).

<sup>7</sup>See U.S. Capitol Police, *Directive 1020.004 Use of Force* (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 26, 2016); and *Human Capitol Strategic Plan, 2021-2025* (Washington, D.C.). See also GAO, *Human Capitol: A Guide for Assessing Strategic Training and Development Efforts in the Federal Government*, [GAO-04-546G](#) (Washington, D.C.: March 2004); *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: September 2014); and *Federal Workforce: Additional Analysis and Sharing of Promising Practices Could Improve Employee Engagement and Performance*, [GAO-15-585](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 14, 2015).

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**Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and  
Methodology**

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the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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# Appendix II: Copy of the GAO Survey of U.S. Capitol Police Officers

To describe the perspectives of U.S. Capitol Police officers regarding their preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack, we conducted an electronic survey of Capitol Police officers who were on duty at any point on January 6, 2021.<sup>1</sup> We used the survey to obtain officers' perspectives on training, policy, and guidance for use of force and crowd control, as well as to collect any suggestions officers have to improve their ability to respond to future events similar to the January 6 attack. We deployed the survey from June through September 2021. We received a response rate of approximately 20 percent, which included responses from 315 officers who reported being on duty at the Capitol complex on January 6. Below is a reproduction of the survey.

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## Survey Introduction

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), the audit and evaluation arm of the Congress, has been asked by Congress to obtain the perspectives of U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) officers on the events of January 6, 2021. Specifically, we are seeking to obtain information from USCP officers on use of force and crowd control policy, training, and guidance as well as any actions that could be taken to improve USCP's response to future similar events.

While USCP leadership is generally supportive of GAO's efforts to survey USCP officers, the questions in this survey have been developed by GAO and we will not be sharing individual responses with USCP leadership.

GAO will generally report the results of this survey in the aggregate. GAO may incorporate individual answers in the report, but will do so in a manner designed to ensure that individual respondents cannot be identified. Prior to the completion of our final report, we will permanently

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<sup>1</sup>In our survey data, officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of our respondents.

remove all identifiers from the questionnaires and we will destroy all records that link completed questionnaires to individual respondents.

When completing this survey, we ask that you not disclose information in your narrative responses about any ongoing investigations, counterterrorism, or other national intelligence matters.

### Respondent characteristics

The questions below ask for general information about your background and status on January 6, 2021.

1. Were you at the Capitol Complex for duty at any time during January 6, 2021?

For the purposes of this survey, Capitol Complex refers to any buildings, grounds, parks, and areas designated under the protection of USCP jurisdiction, including the Capitol building, grounds surrounding the Capitol building, and congressional offices.

- a. Yes
  - b. No (skip to end of survey)
2. Were you present for duty on January 6, 2021 during the following time periods? (select all that apply)

Time Period	Yes	No
a. Prior to the onset of the large-scale demonstration as well as the arrival of protestors at the Capitol Complex (i.e., before 12:45 pm Eastern Time)	n/a	n/a
b. During the large-scale demonstration, including when large crowds arrived at the Capitol Complex and breached the Capitol building (i.e., from approximately 12:45 pm to 7:30 pm Eastern Time)	n/a	n/a
c. After the vast majority of protestors had left the Capitol Complex and grounds (i.e., after 7:30 pm Eastern Time)	n/a	n/a

2A. If you answered no for all three time periods, please explain your presence for duty at the Capitol Complex on January 6, 2021?

3. What was your assigned Bureau on January 6, 2021?
  - a. Protective Services Bureau (Dignitary Protection Division, Investigations Division, and Intelligence and Interagency Coordination Division)
  - b. Security Services Bureau

- c. Training Services Bureau
  - d. Command and Coordination Bureau (Command Division and Coordination Division)
  - e. Uniformed Services Bureau (Capitol Division, Senate Division, House Division, and Library Division)
  - f. Operational Services Bureau (Special Operations Division and Hazardous Incident Response Division)
  - g. Other: (Please identify this other Bureau)
4. Were you deployed at any time on January 6, 2021, as part of a Civil Disturbance Unit?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
5. Were you deployed at any time on January 6, 2021, as part of the Containment and Emergency Response Team?
- a. Yes
  - b. No
6. How many years of law enforcement service at USCP did you have as of January 6, 2021?
- a. Less than 2 years
  - b. 2 years to less than 5 years
  - c. 5 years to less than 10 years
  - d. 10 years to less than 15 years
  - e. 15 years to less than 20 years
  - f. 20 or more years
7. How many total years have you served as a law enforcement officer as of January 6, 2021, including with USCP and other law enforcement agencies?

- a. Less than 2 years
- b. 2 years to less than 5 years
- c. 5 years to less than 10 years
- d. 10 years to less than 15 years
- e. 15 years to less than 20 years
- f. 20 or more years

### Experiences on January 6, 2021

The questions below ask about some of your experiences on January 6, 2021.

For the purposes of this survey, **use of force** refers to actions taken by an officer that are reasonably necessary to gain control of a situation.

Reminder: We will not be sharing individual responses with USCP leadership. GAO may incorporate individual answers in the report, but will do so in a manner designed to ensure that individual respondents cannot be identified.

8. Did you experience any of the following types of direct interaction with the protestors who were present at the Capitol building and/ or Capitol Complex on January 6, 2021?

1. For the purposes of this survey, **direct interaction** refers to physical proximity and/or contact with protesters.

2.

Type of direct interaction	Yes	No
a. I had direct interaction with protestors <b>outside of the Capitol building</b> (i.e., outdoor space surrounding the Capitol building)	n/a	n/a
b. I had direct interaction with protestors <b>inside the Capitol building</b>	n/a	n/a
c. I had direct interaction with protestors <b>at one or more locations other than the Capitol building on the Capitol Complex</b> , such as inside or outside Congressional office buildings	n/a	n/a

9. Did you experience any of the following types of assault at the Capitol Complex on January 6, 2021?



**Appendix II: Copy of the GAO Survey of U.S. Capitol Police Officers**

Type of assault	Yes	No
a. I was verbally assaulted by protestors (e.g., called names or threatened)	n/a	n/a
b. I was physically assaulted by protestors (e.g., pushed, punched, or hit with objects thrown or sprayed by protestors)	n/a	n/a
Other: (Please describe this other kind of assault)	n/a	n/a

10. Did you use any of the following types of force when you were present for duty on January 6, 2021?

Type of Force	Used	Not used
Non-physical tactics (e.g. officer presence and giving verbal commands)	n/a	n/a
Empty hand controls (e.g., hands on tactics, escort positions, strikes, takedowns, pushes)	n/a	n/a
Baton	n/a	n/a
Chemical spray (e.g., OC spray)	n/a	n/a
Other chemical agents (e.g., hand-tossed or launched canisters or munitions with OC, CS, or PAVA in either gas, powder, or liquid form)	n/a	n/a
Diversionary devices (e.g., flash bang)	n/a	n/a
Kinetic impact munitions (e.g., sting balls, impact rounds, bean bag rounds)	n/a	n/a
Non-irritant smoke (i.e., smoke that does not contain a chemical irritant)	n/a	n/a
Shield as a defensive or offensive tactic	n/a	n/a
Improvised weapon (e.g., objects found, such as a fire extinguisher)	n/a	n/a

**Experiences prior to January 6, 2021**

The questions below relate to your experiences prior to January 6, 2021.

11. Prior to January 6, 2021, how many times have you been deployed to provide crowd control tactics during large-scale demonstrations, either at USCP or as a law enforcement officer with another agency? Please check Not Applicable if you have not previously worked for another law enforcement agency.

**Appendix II: Copy of the GAO Survey of U.S. Capitol Police Officers**

For the purposes of this survey, a **large-scale demonstration** refers to the kind of large demonstrations, rallies, and protests that might typically occur on Capitol Complex grounds or other locations in terms of the size, behavior, and general nature of the crowd. Such demonstrations may be largely peaceful, but have the potential for violence by demonstrators.

For the purposes of this survey, **crowd control tactics** refers to tactics used to manage a large group, including use of force given the possibility that the group may become violent. Such operations include how to engage with protestors during demonstrations, protests, and rallies. Crowd control tactics may be used as part of the Civil Disturbance Unit or not.

<b>Frequency of providing crowd control tactics</b>	<b>0 times</b>	<b>1- 10 times</b>	<b>11-50 times</b>	<b>51-100 times</b>	<b>More than 100 times</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
Number of times deployed to provide crowd control tactics while employed by USCP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of times deployed to provide crowd control tactics while employed by another law enforcement agency	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

12. Prior to January 6, 2021, had you ever used any of the following types of force during a non-training situation, either at USCP or as a law enforcement officer with another agency?

<b>Type of Force</b>	<b>Used</b>	<b>Not used</b>
a. Non-physical tactics (e.g. officer presence and giving verbal commands)	n/a	n/a
b. Empty hand controls (e.g., hands on tactics, escort positions, strikes, takedowns, pushes)	n/a	n/a
c. Baton	n/a	n/a
d. Chemical spray (e.g., OC spray)	n/a	n/a
e. Other chemical agents (e.g., hand-tossed or launched canisters or munitions with OC, CS, or PAVA in either gas, powder, or liquid form)	n/a	n/a
f. Diversionary devices (e.g., flash bang)	n/a	n/a

Type of Force	Used	Not used
g. Kinetic impact munitions (e.g., sting balls, impact rounds, bean bag rounds)	n/a	n/a
h. Non-irritant smoke (i.e., smoke that does not contain a chemical irritant)	n/a	n/a
i. Shield as a defensive or offensive tactic	n/a	n/a
j. Improvised weapon (e.g., objects found, such as a fire extinguisher)	n/a	n/a

## Training and Preparation

The questions below ask about training and preparation prior to January 6, 2021.

For the purposes of the survey, **training** refers to class instruction, on-the-job training, online training, and hands on exercises.

13. Based on the training you received while working for USCP, how prepared did you feel **prior to January 6, 2021** to apply use of force?
- a. Well prepared
  - b. Somewhat prepared
  - c. Slightly prepared
  - d. Not at all prepared
  - e. Not applicable because USCP did not train me on applying use of force

13A. If you answered C (slightly prepared) or D (not at all prepared), please explain why you felt unprepared to apply use of force. (open ended)

14. Based on the training you received while working for USCP, how prepared did you feel **prior to January 6, 2021** to apply crowd control tactics?
- a. Well prepared
  - b. Somewhat prepared

- c. Slightly prepared
- d. Not at all prepared
- e. Not applicable because USCP did not train me on applying crowd control tactics

14A. If you answered C (slightly prepared) or D (not at all prepared), please explain why you felt unprepared to apply crowd control tactics. (open ended)

15. When you look back on the events that took place at the Capitol Complex on January 6, 2021, how prepared were you to apply the use of force?

- a. Well prepared
- b. Somewhat prepared
- c. Slightly prepared
- d. Not at all prepared
- e. Not applicable (Please explain why this is not applicable for you)

15A. If you answered C (slightly prepared) or D (not at all prepared), please explain why you felt unprepared. (open ended)

16. When you look back on the events that took place at the Capitol Complex on January 6, 2021, how prepared were you to apply crowd control tactics that day?

- a. Well prepared
- b. Somewhat prepared
- c. Slightly prepared
- d. Not at all prepared
- e. Not applicable (Please explain why this is not applicable for you)

16A. If you answered C (slightly prepared) or D (not at all prepared), please explain why you felt unprepared. (open ended)

17. Open ended: What additional training or changes to existing training, if any, could USCP provide to improve your ability to respond to future events, such as what occurred on January 6, 2021? Please note: There will be an opportunity to write about non-training issues at the end of the survey.

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### “Day Of” Guidance on January 6, 2021

The questions below ask about guidance you received on the day of January 6, 2021.

18. How clear was any pre-operational guidance you received from your supervisor(s) before or at the beginning of your shift concerning the use of crowd control tactics on January 6, 2021? If you did not receive any such guidance, please select not applicable.

*For the purposes of this survey, **guidance before or at the beginning of your shift** refers to any communication you received from your supervisors prior to beginning your duties on January 6, 2021. You may have received such guidance on the days prior to your shift on January 6, 2021. For example, you may have received a verbal briefing prior to your shift or emails from your supervisors or management on the planned crowd control tactics for that day.*

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Slightly clear
- d. Not at all clear
- e. Not applicable (Please explain why this is not applicable for you)

18A. If you answered C (slightly clear) or D (not at all clear), please explain how the guidance was unclear (open ended)

19. How clear was the guidance you received from your supervisor(s) concerning crowd control tactics after the onset of the large-scale demonstration and arrival of protestors at the Capitol Complex (i.e.,

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after approximately 12:45 pm Eastern Time) on January 6, 2021? If you did not receive any such guidance, please select not applicable.

*For the purposes of this survey, **guidance received throughout the course of the events** on January 6, 2021 refers to any communication you received on changes to the previously established plans crowd control tactics that day based on the changing nature of the crowd amassing at the Capitol Complex. Such guidance may have been communicated to you from your supervisors or management through other sources.*

- a. Very clear
- b. Somewhat clear
- c. Slightly clear
- d. Not at all clear
- e. Not applicable (Please explain why this is not applicable for you)

19A. If you answered C (slightly clear) or D (not at all clear), please explain how the guidance was unclear (open ended)

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## Reflections on January 6, 2021

The questions below ask you to reflect on your experiences on January 6, 2021.

1. Open-ended: Based on your experiences on January 6, 2021, what actions, if any, could USCP take to help improve officers' ability to respond to future events such as what occurred on January 6, 2021?
2. Open-ended: Based on your experiences on January 6, 2021, what actions, taken by USCP, helped improve officers' ability to respond to the events that occurred that day?

## Appendix III: Survey Results

To understand officer perspectives on the January 6, 2021 attack, we conducted an electronic survey of Capitol Police officers. We received a response rate of approximately 20 percent, which included responses from 315 officers who reported being on duty at the Capitol complex on January 6, 2021. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day; however, we believe that the experiences and perspectives of the officers who were on duty that day and chose to respond to our survey provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. For more information on our survey methodology, see appendix I. For a copy of the survey instrument, see appendix II.

Tables 5 through 21 shows officer responses to questions about their characteristics; experience using force and crowd control prior to January 6, 2021; and perspectives of preparedness to use force and apply crowd control from training and guidance. These data include responses from all respondents who indicated that they were at the Capitol complex for duty at any point during January 6, 2021.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 5: Reported Bureau Assignments for Survey Respondents on January 6, 2021**

Bureau	Count	Percent of respondents
Protective Services Bureau	59	18.8
Command and Coordination Bureau	16	5.1
Uniformed Services Bureau	183	58.3
Operational Services Bureau	37	11.8
Other (e.g., Inauguration Task Force, Security Services Bureau, and Training Services Bureau)	19	6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

<sup>1</sup>We determined this based on the respondent's answer to the first question from our survey. For the purpose of this report, "Capitol complex" refers to any buildings, grounds, parks, and areas designated under the protection of Capitol Police jurisdiction, including the Capitol Building, grounds surrounding the Capitol Building, and congressional offices. We also present responses from respondents who indicated that they were present for duty either prior to the onset, during, or after the large-scale demonstrations on January 6, 2021, as determined by the respondent's answer to our survey's second question. See app. II for more information.

**Appendix III: Survey Results**

Note: One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer this question. Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 3 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 6: Time Periods during Which Survey Respondents Were Present during the January 6, 2021 Attack**

Time period	Yes	No	Total
Prior to the onset of the large-scale demonstration as well as the arrival of protestors at the Capitol Complex (i.e., before 12:45 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST))	241 (77.2%)	71 (22.8%)	<b>312 (100.0%)</b>
During the large-scale demonstration, including when large crowds arrived at the Capitol Complex and breached the Capitol building (i.e., from approximately 12:45 pm to 7:30 pm EST)	298 (95.8%)	13 (4.2%)	<b>311 (100.0%)</b>
After the vast majority of protestors had left the Capitol Complex and grounds (i.e., after 7:30 pm EST)	301 (97.1%)	9 (2.9%)	<b>310 (100.0%)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: Five of 315 respondents who were on duty January 6, 2021 did not respond to all parts of this question. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 2 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 7: Survey Respondents Who Were Deployed on January 6, 2021, as Part of the Civil Disturbance Unit or Containment and Emergency Response Team**

Team	Yes	No	Total
Civil Disturbance Unit	89 (28.5%)	223 (71.5%)	<b>312 (100.0%)</b>
Containment and Emergency Response Team	25 (8.0%)	287 (92.0%)	<b>312 (100.0%)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: Three of 315 respondents who were on duty January 6, 2021 did not answer both questions. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 4 and 5 from our survey (see app. II for more information).



Appendix III: Survey Results

**Table 8: Reported Years of Experience as a Law Enforcement Officer at the U.S. Capitol Police**

n/a	At the U.S. Capitol Police		At the U.S. Capitol Police and other law enforcement agencies	
	Count	Percent of respondents	Count	Percent of respondents
Years of experience				
Less than 2 years	12	3.8	12	3.8
2 years to less than 5 years	56	17.8	52	16.6
5 years to less than 10 years	26	8.3	28	8.9
10 years to less than 15 years	59	18.8	52	16.6
15 years to less than 20 years	99	31.5	91	29.0
20 or more years	62	19.7	79	25.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer these questions. Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 6 and 7 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 9: Survey Respondents' Crowd Control Experience Prior to the January 6, 2021 Attack**

n/a	Number of times deployed to provide crowd control tactics during large-scale demonstrations (percent of respondents)						Total
	0 times	1- 10 times	11-50 times	51-100 times	More than 100 times	Not applicable	
Years of service with Capitol Police							
Less than 15 years	11 (7.2%)	56 (36.6%)	62 (40.5%)	17 (11.1%)	6 (3.9%)	1 (0.7%)	<b>153 (100.0%)</b>
15 or more years	6 (3.7%)	51 (31.7%)	54 (33.5%)	24 (14.9%)	20 (12.4%)	6 (3.7%)	<b>161 (100.0%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17 (5.4%)</b>	<b>107 (34.1%)</b>	<b>116 (36.9%)</b>	<b>41 (13.1%)</b>	<b>26 (8.3%)</b>	<b>7 (2.2%)</b>	<b>314 (100.0%)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data | GAO-22-104829

Note: One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer both questions. Respondent years of service have been collapsed into two categories. A large-scale demonstration refers to the kind of large demonstrations, rallies, and protests that might typically occur on Capitol complex grounds or other locations in terms of the size, behavior, and general nature of the crowd. Years of service refers to service as a law enforcement officer with the U.S. Capitol Police. Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but

**Appendix III: Survey Results**

we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 6 and 11 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 10: Locations of Direct Interaction with Demonstrators**

Location of direct interaction with demonstrators	Count	Percent of respondents
Outside of the Capitol building	157	50.0
Inside the Capitol building	132	42.6
Other locations on the Capitol complex (e.g., office buildings)	95	30.5

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this survey, direct interaction refers to physical proximity or contact with demonstrators. Percentages do not add up to 100 because officers had the option to indicate multiple locations with direct interaction with demonstrators. Five officers who completed our survey and had indicated that they were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer all parts of this question. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 8 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 11: Assault Experienced by U.S. Capitol Police Officers**

Types of assault experienced	Count	Percent of respondents
Verbal (e.g., threatened)	176	56.2
Physical (e.g., pushed, punched, and sprayed by demonstrators)	123	39.2
Other (e.g., spit on)	20	6.9

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because officers had the option to indicate multiple types of assault. Twenty-four of 315 respondents did not answer all parts of this question. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 9 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 12: Survey Respondents' Experiences Using Force during the January 6, 2021 Attack**

Types of force	Count	Percent of respondents	Total
Nonphysical tactics (e.g., officer presence and giving verbal commands)	199	64.0	311
Empty hand controls (e.g., hands on tactics, strikes, and pushes)	133	42.4	314
Shield as a defensive or offensive tactic	43	13.8	311

Appendix III: Survey Results

Types of force	Count	Percent of respondents	Total
Baton	66	21.2	312
Chemical spray	42	13.6	308
Other chemical agents (e.g., hand-tossed or launched canisters or munitions)	9	2.9	309
Diversionsary devices (e.g., flash bang)	3	1.0	310
Improvised weapon (e.g., objects found, such as a fire extinguisher)	24	7.7	311
Nonirritant smoke (i.e., smoke that does not contain a chemical irritant)	3	1.0	309
Kinetic impact munitions (e.g., sting balls, impact rounds, bean bag rounds)	3	1.0	311

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: We did not request information from survey respondents on their experiences using lethal force, such as withdrawing or firing their firearm. Seven of 315 respondents who were on duty January 6, 2021 did not answer all parts of this question. Percentages do not add to 100 because respondents could select multiple responses. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 10 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 13: Survey Respondents' Experience Using Less-Lethal Force Prior to January 6, 2021 Compared with Force Used during the January 6, 2021 Attack**

n/a	Not used during the January 6 attack		Used during the January 6 attack		n/a
	Never used before	Used before	Never used before	Used before	
<b>Less-lethal force</b>					<b>Total</b>
Nonphysical tactics (e.g., officer presence and giving verbal commands)	8	104	5	194	311
Empty hand controls (e.g., hands on tactics, strikes, and pushes)	41	140	17	116	314
Baton	214	31	56	10	311
Chemical spray	238	26	38	4	306
Other chemical agents (e.g., <b>chemical</b> munition)	291	8	7	2	308
Diversionsary devices (e.g., flash bang)	300	7	3	0	310
Kinetic impact munitions (e.g., sting balls, impact rounds, bean bag rounds)	302	4	3	0	309
Nonirritant smoke (i.e., smoke that does not contain a chemical irritant)	297	7	3	0	307
Shield as a defensive or offensive tactic	198	68	27	15	308
Improvised weapon (e.g., objects found, such as a fire extinguisher)	281	5	22	2	310

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Appendix III: Survey Results

Note: Nine of 315 respondents who were on duty January 6, 2021 did not answer all parts of these questions. We did not request information from survey respondents on their experiences using lethal force, such as withdrawing or firing their firearm. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 10 and 12 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 14: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Their Preparation to Use Force during the Capitol Attack, Broken Out by Years of Service**

Years of service	Level of preparation (percent of respondents)					Total
	Well prepared	Somewhat prepared	Slightly prepared	Not at all prepared	Not applicable	
Less than 15 years	44 (28.9%)	47 (30.9%)	35 (23.0%)	21 (13.8%)	5 (3.3%)	152 (100.0%)
15 or more years	50 (31.3%)	66 (41.3%)	20 (12.5%)	20 (12.5%)	4 (2.5%)	160 (100.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>94 (30.1%)</b>	<b>113 (36.2%)</b>	<b>55 (17.6%)</b>	<b>41 (13.1%)</b>	<b>9 (2.9%)</b>	<b>312 (100.0%)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, years of service refers to service as a law enforcement officer with the U.S. Capitol Police. Three of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer both questions. Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 6 and 15 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 15: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Their Preparation to Use Force during the Capitol Attack, Broken Out by Whether They Were Assigned to the Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU)**

Years of Service	Level of preparation (percent of respondents)					Total
	Well prepared	Somewhat prepared	Slightly prepared	Not at all prepared	Not applicable	
n/a						
CDU	20 (22.7%)	30 (34.1%)	22 (25.0%)	16 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	88 (100.0%)
Not CDU	74 (33.3%)	82 (36.9%)	33 (14.9%)	24 (10.8%)	9 (4.1%)	222 (100.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>94 (30.3%)</b>	<b>112 (36.1%)</b>	<b>55 (17.7%)</b>	<b>40 (12.9%)</b>	<b>9 (2.9%)</b>	<b>310 (100.0%)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, years of service refers to service as a law enforcement officer with the U.S. Capitol Police. Five of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer both questions. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 4 and 15 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

Appendix III: Survey Results

**Table 16: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Their Preparation to Apply Crowd Control Tactics During the January 6 Attack, Broken Out by Years of Service**

n/a Years of service	Level of preparation (percent of respondents)					Total
	Well prepared	Somewhat prepared	Slightly prepared	Not at all prepared	Not applicable	
Less than 15 years	12 (7.9%)	51 (33.6%)	24 (15.8%)	54 (35.5%)	11 (7.2%)	152 (100.0%)
15 or more years	13 (8.2%)	58 (36.7%)	32 (20.3%)	43 (27.2%)	12 (7.6%)	158 (100.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 (8.1%)</b>	<b>109 (35.2%)</b>	<b>56 (18.1%)</b>	<b>97 (31.3%)</b>	<b>23 (7.4%)</b>	<b>310 (100.0%)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, training refers to training provided by U.S. Capitol Police, including class instruction, on-the-job training, online training, and hands-on exercises. Five of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer both questions. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 6 and 16 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 17: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Their Preparation to Apply Crowd Control Tactics during the January 6 Attack, Broken Out by Whether They Were Assigned to the Civil Disturbance Unit (CDU)**

n/a Years of service	Level of preparation (percent of respondents)					Total
	Well prepared	Somewhat prepared	Slightly prepared	Not at all prepared	Not applicable	
CDU	8 (9.1%)	23 (26.1%)	17 (19.3%)	38 (43.2%)	2 (2.3%)	88 (100.0%)
Not CDU	17 (7.7%)	85 (38.6%)	39 (17.7%)	58 (26.4%)	21 (9.5%)	220 (100.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 (8.1%)</b>	<b>108 (35.1%)</b>	<b>56 (18.2%)</b>	<b>96 (31.2%)</b>	<b>23 (7.5%)</b>	<b>308 (100.0%)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, training refers to training provided by U.S. Capitol Police, including class instruction, on-the-job training, online training, and hands-on exercises. Seven of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer both questions. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 4 and 16 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

Appendix III: Survey Results

**Table 18: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Their Preparation to Use Force Based on Prior Training, Broken Out by Years of Service**

n/a	Level of preparation (percent of respondents)				
Years of service	Well prepared	Somewhat prepared	Slightly prepared	Not at all prepared	Total
Less than 15 years	42 (27.6%)	58 (38.2%)	31 (20.4%)	21 (13.8%)	152 (100.0%)
15 or more years	59 (36.9%)	61 (38.1%)	26 (16.3%)	14 (8.8%)	160 (100.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>101 (32.4%)</b>	<b>119 (38.1%)</b>	<b>57 (18.3%)</b>	<b>35 (11.2%)</b>	<b>312 (100.0%)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, training refers to training provided by U.S. Capitol Police prior to the January 6 attack, including class instruction, on-the-job training, online training, and hands on exercises. Years of service refers to service as a law enforcement officer with the U.S. Capitol Police. Three of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer both questions. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 6 and 13 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 19: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on Their Preparation to Apply Crowd Control Tactics Based on Prior Training, Broken Out by Years of Service**

n/a	Level of preparation (percent of respondents)					
Years of service	Well prepared	Somewhat prepared	Slightly prepared	Not at all prepared	Not applicable	Total
Less than 15 years	9 (5.9%)	69 (45.1%)	45 (29.4%)	26 (17.0%)	4 (2.6%)	153 (100.0%)
15 or more years	25 (15.7%)	71 (44.7%)	38 (23.9%)	18 (11.3%)	7 (4.4%)	159 (100.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>34 (10.9%)</b>	<b>140 (44.9%)</b>	<b>83 (26.6%)</b>	<b>44 (14.1%)</b>	<b>11 (3.5%)</b>	<b>312 (100.0%)</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, training refers to training provided by U.S. Capitol Police, including class instruction, on-the-job training, online training, and hands-on exercises. Three of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and were on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer both questions. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to questions 6 and 14 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

Appendix III: Survey Results

**Table 20: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on the Clarity of Preoperational Guidance Received from Supervisors Concerning the Use of Crowd Control Tactics on January 6, 2021 by Rank**

Category	Private First Class and technicians	Sergeant and higher rank	All respondents
Very clear	3	5	8
Somewhat clear	27	10	37
Slightly clear	21	12	33
Not at all clear	108	26	134
Not applicable because the officer stated that no guidance was given	35	9	44
Not applicable for other reason (e.g., assignment had no contact with crowd)	33	25	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>314</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, preoperational guidance refers to any communication respondents received from supervisors prior to beginning their duties on January 6. The guidance may have been received the morning of that day or in the days prior to their shift, such as a verbal briefing prior to their shift or emails from management on the planned crowd control tactics for that day. One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January 6, 2021 did not answer this question. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 18 from our survey (see app. II for more information).

**Table 21: Survey Respondents' Perspectives on the Clarity of Guidance They Received from Supervisors Concerning the Use of Crowd Control Tactics during the January 6, 2021 Attack**

Survey response	Count	Percent of respondents
Very clear	5	1.6
Somewhat clear	24	7.6
Slightly clear	23	7.3
Not at all clear	138	43.9
Not applicable because no guidance was given	48	15.3
Not applicable for other reason (e.g., assignment had no contact with crowd)	76	24.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: GAO analysis of survey data. | GAO-22-104829

Note: For the purposes of this table, guidance received during the January 6 attack refers to any communication respondents received on changes to the previously established plans for crowd control tactics that day based on the changing nature of the crowd amassing at the Capitol Complex. Such guidance may have been communicated to respondents from their supervisors or management via other sources. One of the 315 officers who responded to our survey and was on duty on January

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### Appendix III: Survey Results

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6, 2021 did not answer this question. Percentages do not equal 100 due to rounding. We estimate a 20 percent response rate to our survey. Because officers' names were de-linked from the unique survey identification numbers to protect the confidentiality of respondents, we could not conduct a non-response bias analysis to compare the characteristics of officers who completed the survey against those who did not and determine if there was any bias or differences among specific subgroups. The results of our survey are not generalizable to all Capitol Police officers who were on duty that day, but we believe the results provide perspectives on officer preparedness for the events that took place during the January 6 attack. The results in this table relate to question 19 from our survey (see app. II for more information).



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## Appendix IV: Comments from the United States Capitol Police

Appendix IV: Comments from the United States Capitol Police



PHONE: 202-224-9806

UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF  
119 D STREET, NE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7218

February 16, 2022

COP 220244

Ms. Gretta L. Goodwin  
Director, Homeland Security & Justice  
Government Accountability Office  
Homeland Security and Justice  
Washington, DC 20226

Dear Ms. Goodwin:

This letter is in response to the recommendations made within the draft report titled *Capitol Attack: Additional Actions Needed to Better Prepare Capitol Police Officers for Violent Demonstrations*. The Department agrees with the recommendations made within this report we are currently taking steps to develop action plans to implement the below recommendations. Specifically, GAO recommended that the United States Capitol Police (USCP):

1. The Capitol Police should better understand officers' comprehension of the department's expectations and policies related to use of force, including identifying underlying causes for potential officer hesitancy to use force.
2. The Capitol Police should make changes, as appropriate, to policy, guidance, and training to address findings from actions taken to better understand officers' comprehension of the department's expectations and policies related to the use of force.
3. The Capitol Police should provide more refresher crowd control training to prepare all officers, including those who are not part of the CDU, for large scale and potentially violent demonstrations.
4. The Capitol Police should provide officers with more realistic training.
5. The Capitol Police should identify underlying factors related to employee concerns with the department following the January 6 attack and develop an action plan to address these issues.

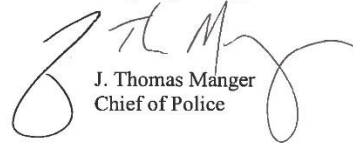
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**Appendix IV: Comments from the United  
States Capitol Police**

*USCP Response to GAO report Capitol Attack: Additional Actions Needed to Better Prepare Capitol  
Police Officers for Violent Demonstrations*

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the GAO's draft report. Your continued support of the women and men of the United States Capitol Police is appreciated.

Very respectfully,



J. Thomas Manger  
Chief of Police

cc: Yogananda D. Pittman, Assistant Chief for Protective & Intelligence Operations  
Sean P. Gallagher, Acting Assistant Chief of Police for Uniformed Operations  
Richard L. Braddock, Chief Administrative Officer  
Carol A. Absher, Program Manager / Audit Liaison

# Accessible Text for Appendix IV: Comments from the United States Capitol Police

February 16, 2022

COP 220244

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Director, Homeland Security & Justice  
Government Accountability Office  
Homeland Security and Justice  
Washington, DC 20226

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1. The Capitol Police should better understand officers' comprehension of the department's expectations and policies related to use of force, including identifying underlying causes for potential officer hesitancy to use force.
2. The Capitol Police should make changes, as appropriate, to policy, guidance, and training to address findings from actions taken to better understand officers' comprehension of the department's expectations and policies related to the use of force.
3. The Capitol Police should provide more refresher crowd control training to prepare all officers, including those who are not part of the CDU, for large scale and potentially violent demonstrations.
4. The Capitol Police should provide officers with more realistic training.

- 
5. The Capitol Police should identify underlying factors related to employee concerns with the department following the January 6 attack and develop an action plan to address these issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the GAO's draft report. Your continued support of the women and men of the United States Capitol Police is appreciated.

Very respectfully,

J. Thomas Manger  
Chief of Police

cc: Yogananda D. Pittman, Assistant Chief for Protective & Intelligence Operations  
Sean P. Gallagher, Acting Assistant Chief of Police for Uniformed Operations  
Richard L. Braddock, Chief Administrative Officer  
Carol A. Absher, Program Manager/ Audit Liaison

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# Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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## GAO Contact

Gretta L. Goodwin 202-512-8777 or [goodwing@gao.gov](mailto:goodwing@gao.gov)

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## Staff Acknowledgments

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