

Durham (NC) Police Department History Highlights



The first patch featured a tobacco leaf reflecting Durham's agricultural origins.

1869: First Constable appointed by Durham's Board of Aldermen to "keep the peace."

1880: First law enforcement officer designated as "Police Chief."

Early 1900s: First traffic officers directed horse drawn vehicles from a small booth at the corner of Main and Corcoran Streets. Salary of the Police Chief was \$75.

1910: First two bicycles purchased to help answer calls more quickly.

1916: Hand-cranked Paddy Wagon called the "Black Maria" was purchased (featured seats on each side and a rear open door; having no battery it operated on a magneto).

1920s: Model T Fords marked the beginnings of a fleet of patrol vehicles. Detective Bureau consisting of six officers formed.

1930s: Police force consisted of 42 men.

1934: Radios installed in five police cars (made of 25-watt transmitters). Cars could receive calls, but could not transmit.

Late 1930s: First 3-wheeler purchased.

1938: Two-way radios were placed in all ten patrol cars. Four cars were on patrol 24 hours a day. Officers could receive messages from the Highway Patrol. Position of Radio Officer was created to assist Desk Officer in writing warrants, booking prisoners, interviewing complaints, answering the telephone and handling radio traffic.

1940: A two-man Vice Squad was formed.

1944: The first two African-American police officers integrated department and marked the beginning of the Hayti Police force.

1950s: Workforce consisted of 126 sworn and civilian employees. Fleet grew to more than 20 automobiles and six motorcycles. Later motorcycles were removed from patrols as a safety precaution, and were only used for parades and other special purposes.



Durham Police Department 1893.



Department's first 3-wheeler late 1930s.



1950s: Pioneer African-American police officers and school crossing guards.

1951: Durham became first city in state to promote an African American policeman to officer's rank and to have an African American detective.

1968: Community Relations Division created.

1971: City administration combined fire and police duties to form a Public Safety Department. First Police Attorney hired.

1972: First two female police officers hired.

1974: Intelligence Unit formed.

1975: Creation of 8-member Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team.

1978: First Bomb Disposal Technician appointed and trained. Internal Affairs Division was formed. School Liaison Program was implemented in county school system targeting middle school student exhibiting delinquent and anti-social behavior.

1980: Polygraphs examinations were first utilized in the investigation of crimes.

1983: CrimeStoppers program began. Formation of Crime Analysis Unit and Traffic Accident Control Team (TACT)

1985: Public Safety Department dissolved. Creation of new (current) uniform patch that features a proud eagle guarding the City of Medicine shield.

1987: The Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program was introduced to Durham City School fifth graders.

Post 1988: Professional Standards Division was formed and consisted of the existing Internal Affairs Unit and two new functions – Staff Inspections and Accreditation. Ranks of Master Patrol Officer and Corporal were instituted. Firearms were changed from the .38 firearm to a .45 caliber semi-automatic. The Motorcycle Squad was established. K-9 Team was formed.

Mid 1980 to 1991: Community-Oriented Policing philosophy adopted. Formation of Motorcycle Squad, K-9 Team and Citizens Police Academy.

1991: Achieved accreditation from Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) - 180th agency in nation and 7th in NC. Rank of Lt. Colonel was created. Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) for Management Information Service was implemented.

1992: Police Headquarters moved to 505 West Chapel Hill Street.

1997: Start of Victim/Witness Services Unit.



Mid 1980s - Vehicle Inspection



1988: First African-American Chief of Police hired.

1998: First female Chief of Police hired. First Mobile Command purchased for \$125,000 with a federal grant.

2003: First Spanish Citizens Police Academy and start of the Citizen Observer Patrol (COP).

2007: Launch of Operation Bull's Eye. First-ever National Crime Victims' Rights Week observance. First Hispanic Chief of Police.

2008: Purchase of second Mobile Command and PC Patrol Car.

2009: Relocation of substations 1, 3 and 5. New long range facility plans initiated.

2010: Start of the Police Athletic League (PAL), Warrant Squad, and department's Annual Service Awards Ceremony.

2011: Firearms Testing Laboratory created.

2012: Formation of Special Victims Unit. Purchase of three utility terrain vehicles. Dodge Chargers selected by officers to replace adding fleet of Ford Crown Victoria cruisers. Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) academy 34 was the largest and most diverse in recent history (consisting of 33 DPD officers; 25 males and eight females; and six fluent Spanish).

2013: Accreditation achieved for seventh consecutive cycle since 1991. First Class D agency in state to apply for and achieve CALEA's Gold Standard Assessment.

2014: Department achieves top 20 National Night Out rankings for the ninth consecutive year.

2015: Police Department workforce consists of 633 positions (512 sworn and 121 non-sworn). Fiscal Year 14-15 General Fund budget totaled \$54,104,265.



Dedication of new Mobile Command as part of 2008 National Night Out promotions.



In 2011, a Firearms Testing Lab was created.



In 2012, first utility terrain vehicles were added to fleet.



2012: BLET Academy #34 was the largest and most diverse in recent departmental history.

For more information or to offer DPD historical data and/artifacts, email Kimberle.Walker@durhamnc.gov or call (919) 560-4322 ext. 29194 in the Public Affairs Unit, Office of the Chief.