

SWEET HOME POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHIEF OF POLICE
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	This Month	Last Month	Last Year	Year to Date	5 Year
	11/30/2021	10/31/2021	11/30/2020	11/30/2021	
Call Volume	718	740	516	8285	8392
CAD Calls	1273	1368	1086	15609	16220
ONIBR Person Crimes	15	19	11	174	150
ONIBR Person Crimes Cleared	11	10	9	123	107
ONIBR Property Crimes	32	41	30	481	492
ONIBR Property Crimes Cleared	8	11	9	118	153

Trends:

As a department we continue to work on select projects in search of improvement. In the past, several problem oriented policing projects have been identified that need to be addressed. Our goal is to find solutions and to solve problems.

One of the problems that we are actively working on solutions for is a Sweet Home Municipal Court warrant reduction program. Sergeant Hickcox has taken on the task of identifying and implementing several initiatives with the hope of reducing the number of warrants that are coming out of our Municipal Court.

This is a chronic problem for the Sweet Home criminal justice system. Those charged with a misdemeanor crime within the city are issued citations in lieu of custody and we are seeing a great number of accused failing to appear on their original court date, resulting in a warrant being issued on the offender for failing to appear. This is the same for FTC warrants. Many of these offenders are local to the area and are often located later by officers in the field. The standard process does not change for arresting someone on an FTA or FTC warrant; they are again issued another citation for the and given another court date to appear. Below we can see that this is an ongoing problem for the past five years. In addition, we can see that there is a high percentage of repeat offenders. Meaning they will FTA on their original charge or FTC with court order and an FTA or FTC warrant will be issued. That offender will then eventually be stopped because of the warrant but given another citation with a court date to appear. The data shows this is a continuous cycle with repeat offenders.

The recent pandemic has caused many problems for criminal justice systems. With courts closing, people losing their jobs, and a complete change in the way these systems operate, one would consider COVID-19 being a root cause of a problem such as this one. However, data pulled from the Sweet Home Police and Municipal Court records shows people chronically failing to appear for their court date or failing to comply with court orders has been an ongoing problem for the past five years. The following table shows the data of failure to appear and

failure to comply warrants issued by the Sweet Home Municipal Court from the year 2016 – 2020:

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
FTA	365	386	369	310	329
FTC	254	251	395	465	321

One cause of this problem is a lack of accountability on the subject being charged with a crime. The Sweet Home Police Department does not have an operational municipal jail. Our facility is considered a jail, by definition, but it is not staffed or operated as a jail due to staffing and funding. Although policy allows the agency to hold someone for a short period of time (4 hours), we still operate on a cite-and-release program. Furthermore, the county jail will not hold arrestees on a Sweet Home Municipal misdemeanor charge unless it is related to domestic violence, which is processed through a different court, not the Sweet Home Municipal Court.

Some other causes to this problem are discovered by looking at the issue through a behavioral science approach. “Behavioral science is the study of how people make decisions and act within a complex and textured world where details matter.” (1) The University of Chicago Crime Lab and ideas42 conducted a study on the specific problem with offenders failing to appear and they used the study of behavioral science to determine some root causes to this problem. Using their behavioral diagnosis methodology, they found four contributing factors to the problem with failure to appear. These four were “mental models, present bias, social norms, and inattention”

Sergeant Hickcox has proposed a strategy to reduce the rates of FTAs and FTCs the Sweet Home Criminal Justice System sees by implementing the two strategies which combine other relevant case studies by different entities. These two strategies involve reformatting our Oregon Uniform Citation and introducing text message reminders to offenders.

Sergeant Hickcox will coordinate the implementation of these ideas and through a combined effort with police and court staff, track the results. As additional information and results become available, they will be shared with Council and the community.

On 12/04/21 the Sweet Home Police Department hosted our annual Shop with a Cop event. Officers, dispatchers, deputies, troopers, and volunteers were able to provide a shopping experience for 30 local kids ranging from the ages of 4 to 17. We have also been able to coordinate gifts for 39 teenagers through out teen sharing tree. These are just a couple of the ways that we are trying to give back to the youth in our community and provide help where we can. These efforts are only made possible by the generous, giving nature of people in our town.