



2019 Complaint Report

Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations

2020

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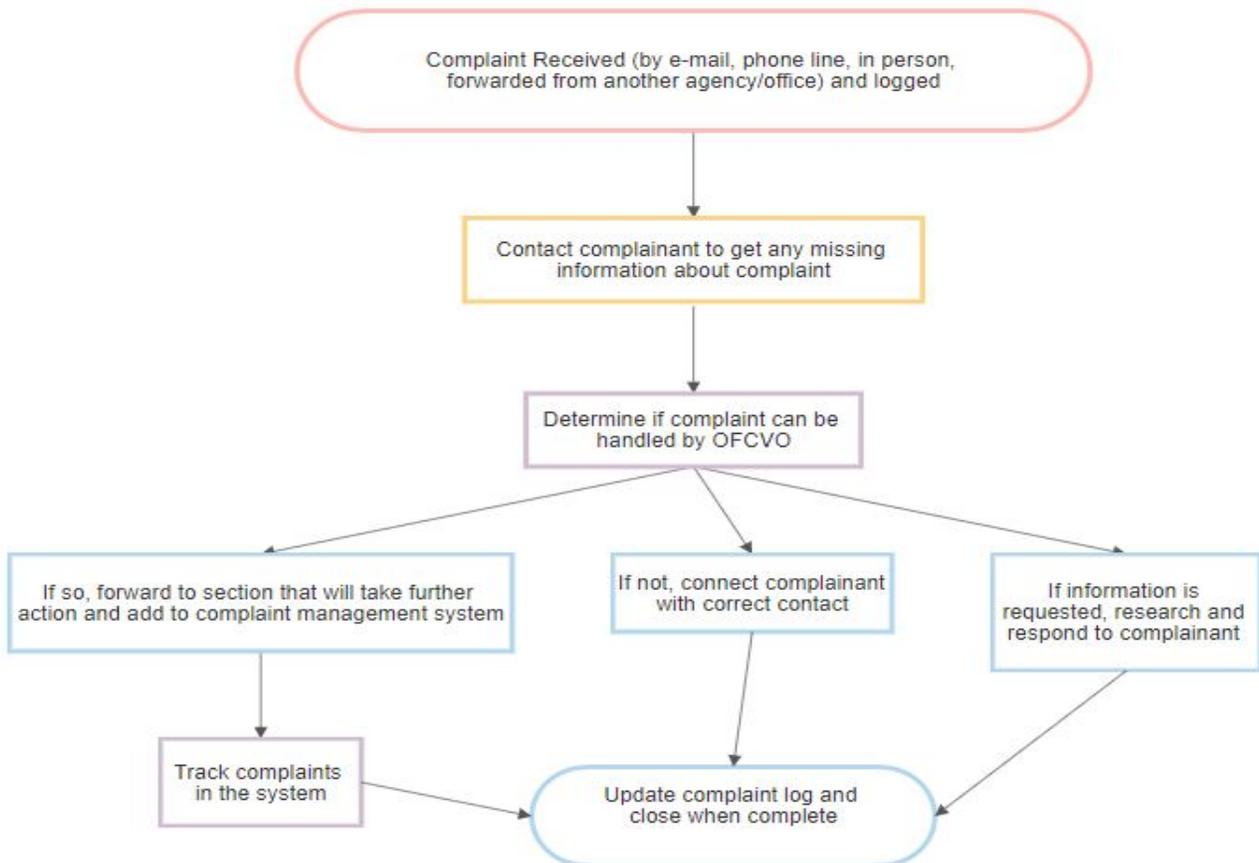
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Background

This report concerns contacts and complaints made to the Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations (OFCVO) Motor Vehicle Complaints Line in 2019.

Process

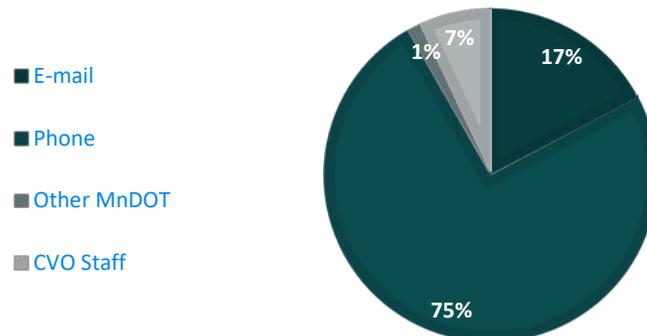
Members of the public contact the Complaints Line via our telephone number, e-mail, in person, through OFCVO employees, and through other government agencies. Once a complaint is received, it is logged. The office contacts the complainant to gather any additional information not included in the initial contact. With the information provided by the complainant, the office determines if the complaint can be handled by OFCVO. If it can, the complaint is added to the complaint management system and forwarded to the section of the office that will take further action. The complaint is tracked in the system as action is taken. When the investigation and any following actions are completed, the complaint log is updated and the complaint is closed in the complaint management system. If the complaint cannot be handled by OFCVO, the office connects the complainant with the correct contact, such as local law enforcement, another state agency, or a federal agency. The complaint log is then updated and the complaint is closed. Some contacts are not complaints, but requests for information. The office will do any research necessary and respond to the complainant. The complaint log is then updated and the complaint is closed.



Contacts

In 2019, the Motor Vehicle Complaint Line received a total of 624 contacts. There was a drop in contacts starting in October that likely reflects a change in response procedure, as well as a general slowdown reflected in fewer e-mails and referrals from other sources. Starting in October, staff began to only respond to voicemails instead of calling back every call received. Phone calls remain the most common method for complainants to be in contact with us. In 2019, there were a total of 464 contacts by phone, 107 by e-mail, 41 by Commercial Vehicle Operations staff, and 12 by other Minnesota Department of Transportation staff.

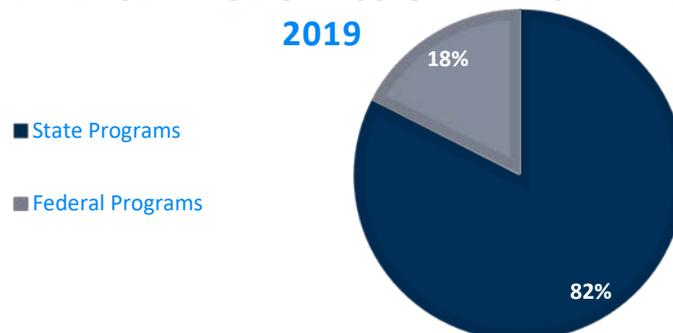
FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF CONTACTS BY SOURCE IN 2019



Assignments

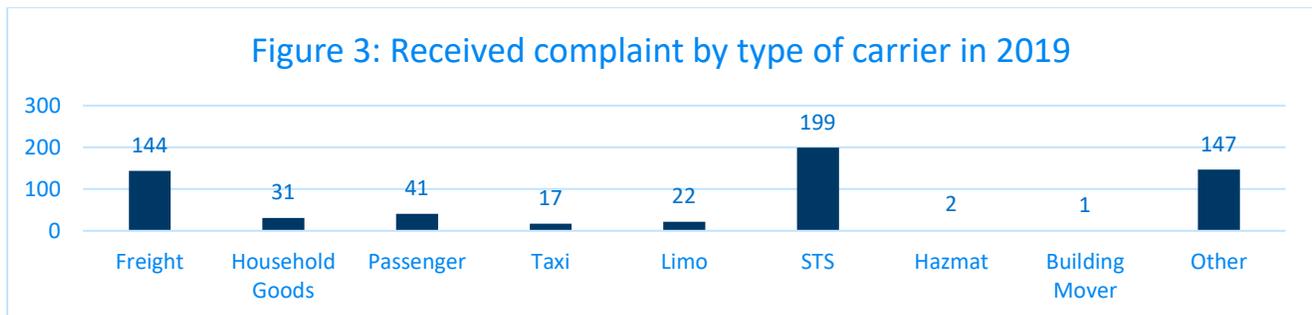
Assignments are made when a complaint is found to be enforceable under OFCVO jurisdiction. The number of assignments depend on both volume and the nature of complaints received. In 2019, we assigned 99 complaints for investigation. Of these, 66 were assigned to our State Programs unit and 14 to our Federal Programs unit. Our Federal Programs unit also has work assigned from federal agencies. Our office receives many calls that need to be forwarded because our phone number is the one that people are most likely to come across in vehicles or online. The destination of these contacts include other offices in the Minnesota Department of Transportation (i.e. out to Districts, MnDOT Ombudsman) other local, state, or federal agencies (i.e. local law enforcement, State Patrol, Department of Labor and Industry, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration).

FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE OF ASSIGNMENTS BY AREA IN 2019



Carriers

A low proportion of assignment are sent to Federal Programs because a high percentage of complaints are about Special Transportation Services (STS) providers, shortly followed by other State Programs regulated forms of transportation. Additionally, there is overlap between FMCSA and Federal Programs jurisdiction. STS, Freight, and Other are the three most common, and most constant, sources of complaints. Other carriers is a category that includes calls requesting information, complaints that did not specify type of carrier, and carriers that do not fit neatly into the other categories. In 2019, there were 199 complaints about STS providers, 144 complaints about Freight providers, and 147 complaints about Other carriers. These three carrier types accounted for 81.13% of all complaints received in 2019.



Resolutions

The resolution of complaints, like the assignments, depend on the type of complaints received. Some complaints take longer to fully close than others. On average, it took 7.2 days to finish an investigation in 2019. Our policy for handling some complaints changed throughout 2019. For example, instead of directing complainants to insurance or providers, issues with Special Transportation Services are now directed to the Ombudsman for Managed Health Care Programs for more effective support. Coordinated actions, such as a fraudulent website or mailing warning of consequences for outdated DOT numbers, lead to increased numbers of complaints at certain times. Many contacts to the complaint line are in fact callers seeking information instead of actual complaints. The most commonly logged resolutions were: Forwarded to the Proper Authority at 351 times (i.e. Ombudsman for Managed Health Care Programs, Department of Public Safety or local police, or the FMCSA), Provided Information at 81 times (i.e. directed caller to correct form or shared insurance information), No Action at 134 times (i.e. there was not enough information to investigate or an initial investigation found no further action necessary), and Follow-up Action Scheduled at 34 times (i.e. an audit was scheduled or a Corrective Action Plan was created).



What Changed in 2019?

- Developed training for office staff to be better equipped to more effectively handle complaints
- Additional staff to address growing volume of complaints
- Changed intake process to be more outwardly facing
- Developed additional contacts with other government agencies and entities to establish a no wrong door policy



Definitions

Complaint: an allegation that a carrier/provider is operating in a manner not in compliance with Minnesota Department of Transportation requirements. Those complaints that fall outside of this definition are forwarded to an agency that has jurisdiction.

Contact: a call, e-mail, or referral that is received by staff in the Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations.

Complainant: the person who initiated the contact.

State Programs: unit responsible for regulating intrastate commercial vehicle activities.

Federal Programs: unit responsible for working with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration in regulating commercial vehicle activities.

Freight: should be classified as property carriers under Minnesota Statute 221

Household Goods: particular property carriers moving people between homes.

Passenger: a motor vehicle that needs to operate under motor vehicle passenger authority.

Taxi: a for-hire passenger vehicle with a capacity less than eight that is regulated at the municipal level.

Limo: luxury vehicles providing for-hire passenger services that operate under commercial vehicle operations limo authority.

Special Transportation Services: transportation primarily for the elderly or disabled or people who qualify for service under the Department of Human Services Non-Emergency Medical Transportation program

Hazmat: transportation of materials designated as hazardous.

Building Mover: transportation of buildings.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration: federal counterpart to the state Commercial Vehicle Operations section.