



Education-Based Development

Denver Police Department
Ron Thomas, Chief of Police

August 19, 2025

Education-Based Development Is Not an attempt to...

- Erode or undermine our current discipline model
- Eliminate oversight from the discipline process
- Bypass the investigative process or sacrifice thoroughness for timeliness
- Allow a “freebie” violation for officers

EBD Does Not Eliminate Accountability or Oversight

This is not an attempt to erode or undermine our current discipline model. It is a more solution-oriented and timely process

- The Discipline Matrix remains unchanged
- The Internal Affairs Bureau will still complete an investigation
- The Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM) review process remains unchanged & the OIM will have the opportunity to make a recommendation as to whether the matter is appropriate for EBD (specifically included in the policy)
- EBD will cancel any mitigating factors for another violation and the opportunity won't be offered again

Current Research

- EBD does not yet have a large body of rigorous, long-term studies, particularly within a policing context.
- There is a strong evidence-based rationale to consider EBD as an effective practice, as interventions grounded in fairness, dialogue, and coaching consistently enhance accountability-related outcomes).

Current Research

- Police Chief Magazine (published by International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)), Education Offers Best Solution for Police Misconduct: “through education standards and continual, focused training, police misconduct can be reduced”.
- Management Study Supplement (published by IACP): “generally, law enforcement leadership should primarily respond to performance issues with a training and development approach and resort to formal discipline only when performance issues become chronic, resistant to training, and/or deliberate”.
- Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety (NIJ and Harvard University): “the primary focus of discipline should be on changing unacceptable behavior”.

Overview

Organizations, including those in law enforcement, are increasingly recognizing the limitations of punitive only disciplinary systems and the advantages of behavior change programs that emphasize coaching, accountability, and skill development.

While direct applications within law enforcement remain limited, this should not preclude adoption. As with all human-centered work, law enforcement can benefit from integrating best practices drawn from human resources, psychology, and leadership coaching. These programs support constructive responses to problematic behavior, strengthen professional growth, and promote healthier, more resilient organizational cultures.

Traditional Punishment v. Behavior Change

Traditional Discipline	Behavior Change Programs
Focus on punishment or compliance	Focus on growth, accountability, and skill-building
Often leads to resentment, disengagement	Increases trust, morale, and productivity
Reactive and often inconsistent	Proactive, structured, and evidence-based
High risk of employee attrition	Encourages retention and internal promotion
May perpetuate fear-based culture	Supports psychologically safe work environments

Some Issues with Current Police Disciplinary Processes

- Alternative courses of action for misconduct that would lead to behavioral change are seldom part of the sanctions imposed on officers.
- Processes generally take an excessive amount of time to complete. In large departments, it can take about six months to complete a complaint investigation, reach a finding and determine disciplinary action if the allegation is sustained.
- In the most serious cases this time can be increased significantly and, when discipline is appealed, it can take well over a year or longer to completely resolve the matter.
- The impact of discipline on the officer and the core message to the department and the community are severely compromised the longer it takes from the time the misconduct occurred to its resolution.

Police Discipline: A Case for Change

NIJ/Harvard University Executive Session on Policing and Public Safety

Education-Based Development

Education-Based Development (EBD) is an alternative to traditional discipline, based on correcting behavior for lower-level violations through training and coaching. EBD is designed to address the root causes of mistakes and improve long-term performance.

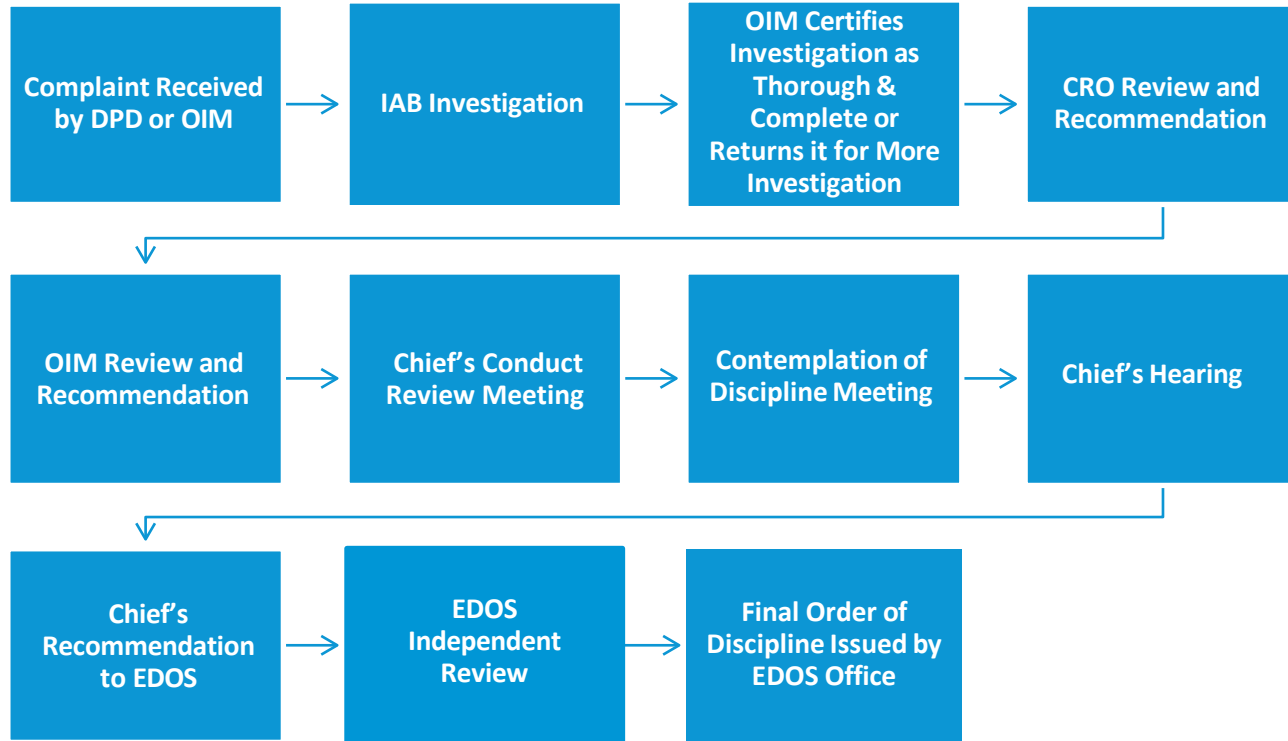
EBD is not a replacement for formal discipline in serious or willful violations, or patterns of misconduct.

Benefits of EBD

EBD promotes timely and meaningful accountability. It reduces repeat offenses by reinforcing expectations through skill-building, while improving officer morale, trust, and professionalism.

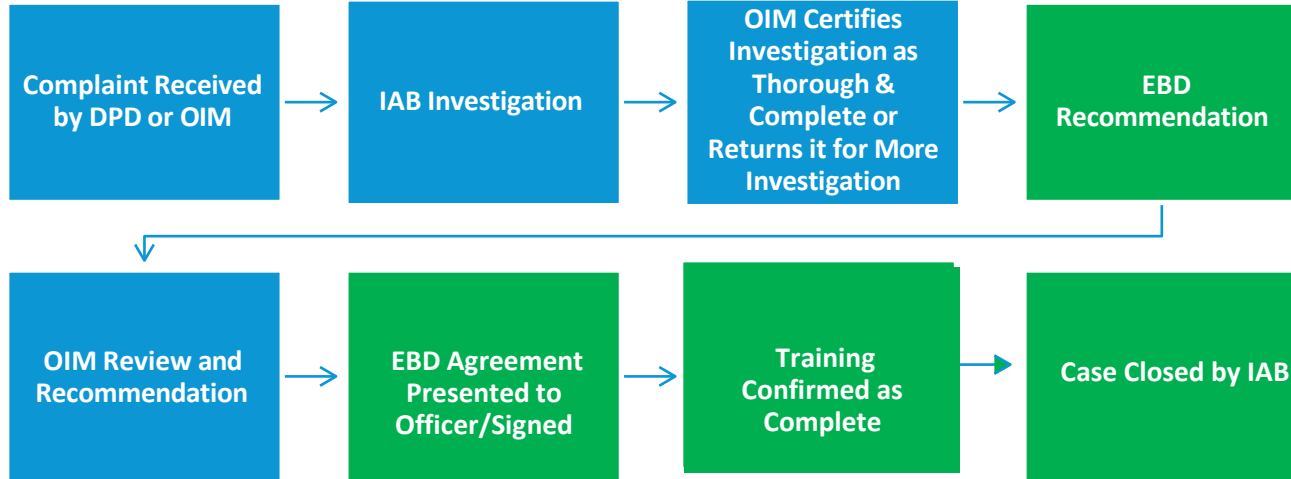
In this regard, we believe EBD will strengthen community trust through positive interactions with police officers.

Current Disciplinary Process



Disciplinary Process with EBD

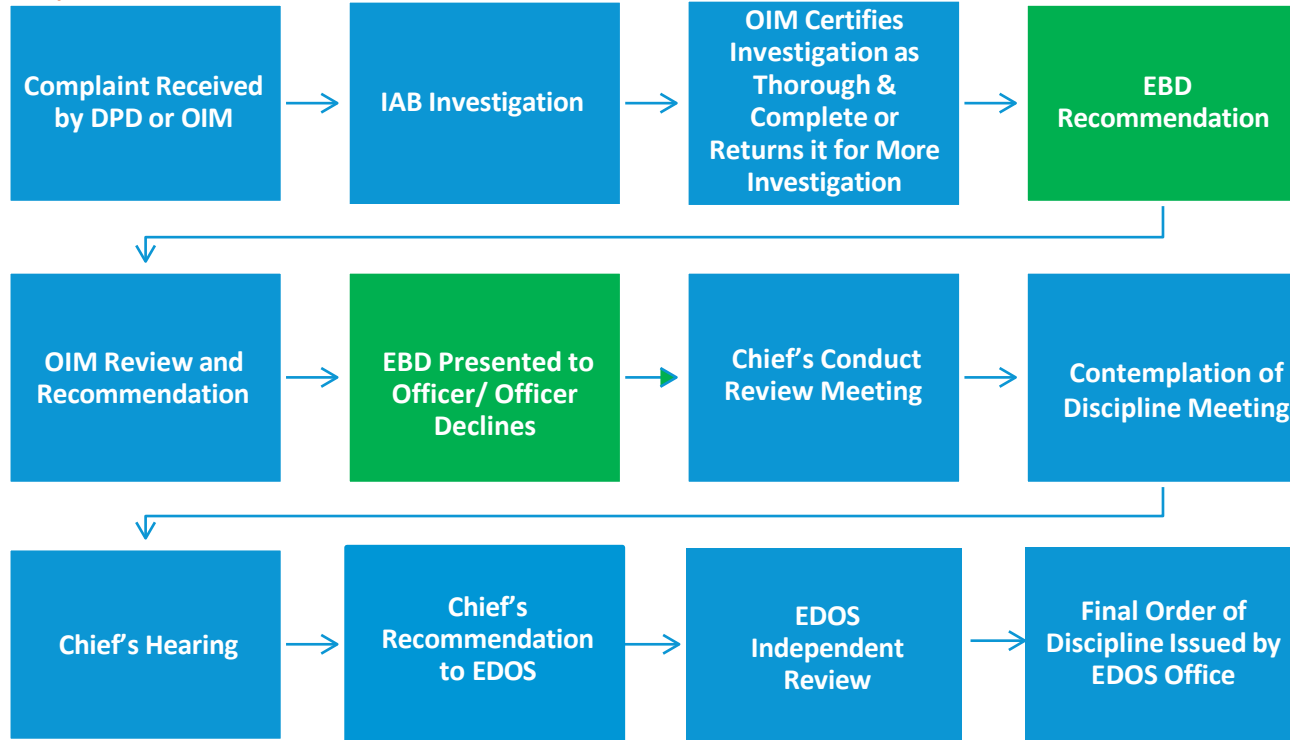
(Officer Accepts Agreement)



If officer fails to complete EBD training, the case is routed through the regular disciplinary process.

Disciplinary Process with EBD

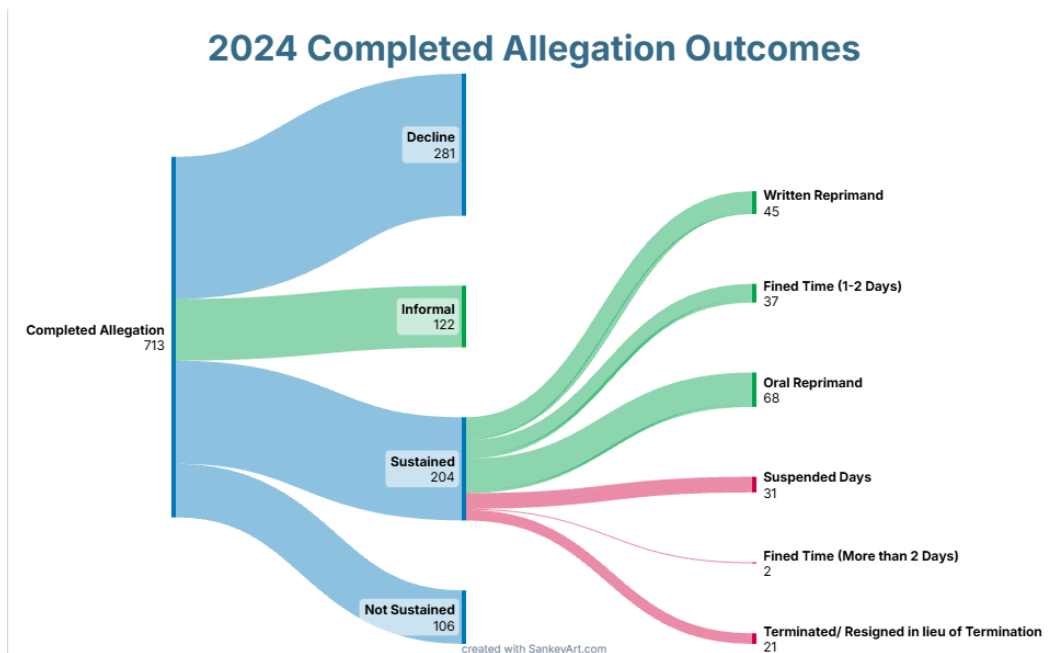
(Officer Does Not Accept Agreement)



Why Denver is Adopting EBD

A review of cases between 2022 and 2025, yielded that 66% of allegations could have been eligible for EBD.

Why Denver is Adopting EBD



Why Denver is Adopting EBD

Days to Complete Cases Based on Completed Year and Highest Level of Discipline

Year	Informal	Oral Reprimand	Written Reprimand	Fined Time	Suspension	Termination	Total
2022	150.0	170.6	200.2	219.1	402.8	429.8	216.9
2023	152.1	221.7	210.5	307.6	402.1	380.8	225.8
2024	112.2	184.4	251.1	362.2	416.0	91.0	209.2
Total	135.5	192.7	220.3	304.8	405.8	342.4	216.9

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2024	112.2	184.4	251.1	362.2	416.0	91.0	209.2
Total	135.5	192.7	220.3	304.8	405.8	342.4	216.9

Stakeholder Engagement

Initial introduction of the EBD concept was shared with the following groups for feedback:

- Chief's Community Advisory Group
- Denver Ministerial Alliance
- Together Colorado, Transforming Justice Committee
- Office of the Independent Monitor
- Denver Police Protective Association
- Peer law enforcement agencies
- Mental health and academic partners

Stakeholder Engagement

Following discussions with the OIM and Citizen Oversight Board (COB), several suggestions were incorporated into the current policy draft and additional community feedback was sought from the following groups:

- Attendees at district community meetings
- Community members on DPD's community engagement distribution list
- COB (follow-up discussion with Chief Thomas and Dr. Tamara Herold)
- OIM (policy recommendations)
- Denver Civil Service Commission

Stakeholder Engagement

Over 800 survey responses were returned following engagement with community members from district meetings and the email distribution list:

- “Do you agree with this program concept?” – 78% yes, 9% no, 11% unsure, 1% no opinion
- “Do you believe this program will have a positive impact on an officer’s behavior?” – 62% yes, 11% no, 23% unsure, 2% no opinion
- “Do you believe this program will have a positive impact on police-community relationships?” – 61% yes, 12% no, 23% unsure, 2% no opinion
- Do you believe this program will enhance the safety of community members?” – 54% yes, 13% no, 27% unsure, 4% no opinion

Eligibility – Denver’s Model Avoids Overreach

- EBD is only eligible for lower-level violations where presumptive penalties would range from an oral/written reprimand to no more than a 1 - 2 day fined time, such as:
 - Discourtesy
 - General Duties and Responsibilities
 - Records and Reports
 - Rough/Careless Handling of Equipment
 - Evidence and Property

APPENDIX A:

Violation	Discipline Category	EBD Option				
		EQ	TS	LD	PJ	HW
Conduct Towards Others						
RR - 114 Intimidation of Persons	E					
RR - 122.1 Respect for Fellow Officer	B	EQ				
RR - 122.2 Abuse of Fellow Officers	C					
RR - 123 Assault to Fellow Officer	E					
RR - 140.1 Discourtesy	B	EQ			PJ	
RR - 140.2 Verbal Assault and Abuse of the Public	C-D					
RR - 310 Mistreatment of Prisoners/Suspects	C					
Duties and Responsibilities						
D&R 3.06 Duties and Responsibilities of All Officers	A-F	EQ		LD	PJ	
D&R 4.00 General Duties and Responsibilities of Supervisory Officers	A-F	EQ		LD	PJ	
D&R 6.04 Duties and Responsibilities of Patrol Officers-Incident Reporting-Investigations-Appropriate Action	A-F	EQ		LD	PJ	
D&R 9.00 Duties and Responsibilities of Detectives	A-F	EQ		LD	PJ	
D&R 10.40 Duties and Responsibilities of a Sergeant to Reviewing Reports and Data	A-F	EQ		LD	PJ	
D&R 11.00 Duties and Responsibilities of Lieutenants	A-F	EQ		LD	PJ	
D&R 13.00 Duties and Responsibilities of Commanders and Career Service Directors	A-F	EQ		LD	PJ	
RR - 127 Responsibilities to Serve Public	B	EQ		LD	PJ	
Firearm Safety						
OMS 120.01(3)(a)(1) Firearms Proficiency	SD		TS			
RR - 401 Display of Firearms	C		TS			
RR - 402 Careless Handling of Firearms or Less Lethal Weapons (excludes firearms)	C-F		TS			
RR - 403 Restrictions on Auxillary Weapons	C		TS			
RR - 809 Rough or Careless Handling of City, Departmental, or Outside Agency Property	B		TS			
Force Related						

EQ: Emotional Intelligence
TS: Tactical Skills

LD: Leadership Development

HW: Health & Wellness
PJ: Procedural Justice

Note: Only A-C violations will be eligible, even if a particular violation can range from A-F.

Eligibility – Denver’s Model Avoids Overreach

- EBD is NOT eligible for more serious violations where presumptive penalties are higher than minor reprimands, such as:
 - Sexual Misconduct
 - Inappropriate Use of Force
 - Commission of a Deceptive Act
 - Assault to a Fellow Officer
 - EEO Violations
 - Bias-Motivated Incidents
 - Repeat Offenses

OMS 105 Use of Force Policy	A-F	Not Eligible
RR – 305 Duty to Protect Prisoner	E	Not Eligible
RR – 310 Mistreatment of Prisoners/Suspects	C	Not Eligible
General Behavior		
RR – 105 Conduct Prejudicial	A-F	Not Eligible
RR – 106 Immoral Conduct	D	Not Eligible
RR – 128.1 Impartial Attitude	B	Not Eligible
RR – 128.2 Impartial Attitude-Bias	D	Not Eligible
RR – 132 Purchase of Forfeited Property	B	Not Eligible
RR – 142 Soliciting Preferential Treatment	C-F	Not Eligible
RR – 203 Accepting Gifts from Persons of Bad Character	E	Not Eligible
RR – 204 Soliciting, Accepting Gifts, Gratuities	C	Not Eligible
RR – 206 Soliciting Business	B	Not Eligible
RR – 302 Personal Family Disputes	E	Not Eligible
RR – 309.1 Suggesting Bondsmen or Attorneys	B	Not Eligible
RR – 702 Using Police Position to Gain Political Office	C	Not Eligible
RR – 703 Soliciting Money for Political Purposes	B	Not Eligible
RR – 704 Soliciting for Promotion, Appointment	B	Not Eligible
Obedience to Laws, Regulations, and Orders		
OMS 102.05 Use of NCIC and CCIC	A-F	Not Eligible
OMS 114.01 Secondary Employment	A-F	EQ LD HW
OMS 119.04 Body-Worn Camera Policy	SD	Not Eligible
RR – 102.1 Duty to Obey Departmental Rules and Mayoral Executive Orders	A-F	EQ LD PJ
RR – 105 Conduct Prejudicial	A-F	Not Eligible
RR – 106.2 Sexual Misconduct	F	Not Eligible
RR – 107 Always on Duty	C	EQ LD HW
RR – 108.1 Plainclothes Officers – Identification	C	EQ LD PJ
RR – 108.2 Protecting Identity of Undercover Officers	B	EQ LD PJ
RR – 109.1 Commission of an Offensive Act While Intoxicated	C	Not Eligible

EQ: Emotional Intelligence

LD: Leadership Development

HW: Health & Wellness

TS: Tactical Skills

PJ: Procedural Justice

Note: Only A-C violations will be eligible, even if a particular violation can range from A-F.

EBD Training Focuses on Community Relationships and Impact of Actions

Training designed around accountability and understanding of the impact to community members due to an officer's actions

- Emotional Intelligence
- Leadership Development
- Procedural Justice
- Tactical Skills
- Health & Wellness

Evaluation and Monitoring

- DPD is committed to evaluating the impact of implementation as part of our approach to accountability.
- We will evaluate the effectiveness of the program and routinely monitor and pivot where needed.
- An upfront diagnostic review of our discipline process, evidence for positive outcomes for training methodology for discipline across all professions, and a testing and measurement tailored to Denver's model.

Transparency

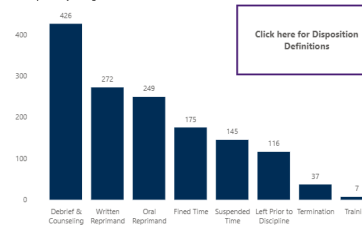
EBD case outcomes will be publicly available through a data dashboard on the Department's Performance & Transparency website.

Internal Affairs Complaints Dashboard

This page contains information regarding cases where an officer's actions were found to have been in violation of a department policy, procedure, rule, regulation, or directive. The visualizations serve as a filter by clicking within the charts. There are also selection filters provided on each page (e.g., year). To move through the dashboard pages, click on the tabs at the top of the page.

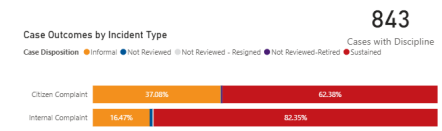
Occurred Year: All
Finding Year: All
Occurred Date Range: 1/5/2019 to 6/21/2025
Finding Date Range: 2/25/2019 to 7/24/2025
Officer Division at Incident: All
Officer Bureau at Incident: All

Discipline by Allegation



[Click here for Disposition Definitions](#)

Overview | No Discipline | **Discipline** | FAQs



Top Ten Most Common Sustained Specifications

Rules and Regulation	Count
RR102.1 - Duty to Obey Departmental Rules and Mayoral Executive Orders	766
RR105 - Conduct Prejudicial	72
RR115.1 - Conduct Prohibited by Law	53
RR122.1 - Respect for Fellow Officer	22
RR127 - Responsibilities to Serve Public	67
RR129 - Giving Name and Badge Number	25
RR140.1 - Discourtesy	111
RR402 - Careless Handling of Firearms or Less Lethal Weapons	26
RR607 - Failure to Make, File, or Complete Official Required Reports	85
RR809 - Rough or Careless Handling of City and Department Property	81
Total	1308