

What are some of the trends you see with crime in Lakewood?

Year to date compared to last year, Lakewood's violent crime is down 4%. Property crime is down 1%. Traffic offenses are significantly down at 50%, with a 73% decrease in fatal collisions.

The homeless problem continues. What is being done? What is in the plans to be done?

Homelessness continues to be a problem nationwide with no simple solutions. Lakewood and Lakewood Police Department have been at the forefront of addressing this in our region. The Lakewood Police Department created a special team called the Community Action Team (CAT) in 2019 to address homelessness and the associated issues in our city. Our CAT Team is comprised of police agents, homeless navigators, and substance-use case managers. Since 2019, our homeless navigators have permanently housed 176 people. Our CAT team agents manage all incoming homeless camp reports and work to ensure a humane response that balances the needs of those experiencing homelessness with the needs of the greater community.

The LPD CAT Team also works hand-in-hand with Lakewood's Housing and Thriving Communities division within the Planning Department. Housing and Thriving Communities has similarly expanded outreach and service navigation to people living on the streets of Lakewood. They are also working to remodel and relaunch the Lakewood Navigation Center at 8000 W. Colfax. Until its closure for remodel, the Navigation Center provided severe weather emergency sheltering and day sheltering. Once it reopens in late 2025, it will provide over one hundred shelter beds and essential housing-focused case management support to have a direct impact on the homelessness in our city.

Belmar – did some stores close due to the amount of crime in that neighborhood? Is Best Buy closing due to high levels of theft?

We are not aware of any business closures due to crime concerns. We review crime statistics in that area often and maintain close communication with Belmar management. To help prevent crime, we provide presentations to retailers in Belmar and proactively work with them to address crime in real time. We also have a working substation to offer more police presence in the area.

Fentanyl – can you give an update on use and problems stemming from its use in Lakewood?

Like many cities in the metro area, Lakewood continues to have problematic fentanyl use. It results in overdoses and overdose deaths. Our agency was one of the first police agencies in the area to carry Narcan and we continue to have numerous lives saved

due to our administration of Narcan. We also recently received a grant to hire two mental health co-responders who will focus on people with substance use disorders. Our members of the regional drug task force also continue their important work of disrupting distribution of this deadly drug.

Does Lakewood have all the officers they need? Is it hard to recruit new officers? Is Lakewood competitive in salary compensation with other cities in the Denver Metro region?

Lakewood recently completed a staffing study to assess if we had the right number of sworn officers. That staffing study confirmed we are generally well staffed. Recruitment is always a challenge, but we have been fortunate to fill each of our academy classes with high quality recruits and expect to do so in the future. Lakewood is extremely competitive within the region – both for base salary and benefits.

Are drones and AI being used to solve crimes, or chase down criminals in Lakewood?

LPD has been using drones since 2018 to help solve crimes. The drone assists with citizen-generated calls for service aiming to enhance public safety and LPD response effectiveness.