



September 11, 2019

Director Andrew Myerberg
Office of Police Accountability
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Director Myerberg,

Please see the below Management Action Recommendation response.

Case Numbers

- 2018OPA-0704 (2019COMP-0018)

Topic

- De-Escalation

Summary:

- Named Employee threatened to shoot a fleeing suspect. Employee asserted that this threat served as a form of de-escalation. OPA disagreed.

OPA Recommendations:

- Revise SPD Policy 8.100 language to clarify that threats of force – and particularly threats of force that would otherwise be excessive do not constitute a de-escalation tactic.

Action Taken:

- On August 16, 2019, revisions to Seattle Police Department Policies and Procedures Manual **Title 8 – Use of Force**, were approved by Federal Court Judge Robart. To address the recommendation the revised policy now reads: (*in part*) (Full De-escalation Policy is attached)

1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Officers Shall Use De-Escalation Tactics in Order to Reduce the Need for Force

(a). *Officers shall conduct a threat assessment so as not to precipitate an unnecessary, unreasonable, or disproportionate use of force by placing themselves or others in undue jeopardy.*

(b). *Team approaches to de-escalation are encouraged and should consider officer training and skill level, number of officers, and whether any officer has successfully established rapport with the subject. Where officers use a team approach to de-escalation, each individual officer's obligation to de-escalate will be satisfied as long as the officer's actions complement the overall approach.*

(c). *Selection of de-escalation options should be guided by the totality of the circumstances with the goal of attaining voluntary compliance; considerations include:*

-(i) Communication

Using communication intended to gain voluntary compliance, such as:

- Verbal persuasion

- Advisements and warnings (including Taser spark display tests to explain/warn prior to Taser application), given in a calm and explanatory manner, Exception: Warnings given as a threat of force are not considered part of de-escalation.

SPD considers this Management Action:

- Fully implemented

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Lesley Cordner
Assistant Chief, Professional Standards Bureau