

Issued Date: December 19, 2025

From: Director Bonnie Glenn
Office of Police Accountability



Case Number: 2025OPA-0167

Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings

Named Employee #1

1. **Allegation #1: 6.220 – Voluntary Contacts, Terry Stops, & Definitions, 6.220-POL-2 Conducting a Terry Stop, 1. Terry Stops are Seizures Based Upon Reasonable Suspicion**
Finding: Sustained
 2. **Allegation #2: 5.001 - Standards and Duties POL-10. Employees Will Strive to be Professional**
Finding: Sustained
 3. **Allegation #3: 9.020 – Uniforms POL 5. All Outward Facing Uniform Items Include Proper Identifying Markings**
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded
- **Proposed Discipline: 18 Hours (2 Days) to 36 Hours (4 Days) Suspension**
 - **Imposed Discipline: 18 Hours (2 Days) Suspension**
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This Closed Case Summary (CCS) represents the opinion of the OPA Director regarding the misconduct alleged and therefore sections may be written in the first person.

Executive Summary:

Named Employee #1 (NE#1) conducted a traffic stop on the Complainant. The Complainant alleged that NE#1 unlawfully detained her and was unprofessional by suggesting that she was under the influence of drugs or alcohol. OPA also investigated whether NE#1's uniform lacked markings identifying him as a police officer.

Administrative Note:

On September 10, 2025, the Office of Inspector General certified OPA's investigation as thorough, timely, and objective.

Summary of the Investigation:

OPA's investigation included reviewing the OPA complaint, body-worn video (BWV), citations, NE#1's OPA complaint history, photographs, and interview statements from the Complainant and NE#1.

A. OPA Complaint and Complainant Interview

On May 7 and 8, 2025, the Complainant submitted OPA complaints. OPA also interviewed the Complainant on May 21, 2025. She provided the following account:

On, May 7, 2025, the Complainant was stopped at a red light in the left lane, with one car ahead of her. NE#1 approached from her right. Due to NE#1's motorcycle being adjacent to her, she was unable to see its turn signal. She was unaware of a police officer being beside her, as NE#1 was simply dressed in a black leather jacket, and the motorcycle's emergency lights, or siren were not activated. When the light turned green, she drove forward, maintaining her course; however, NE#1 then tried to merge into her lane in front of her. Consequently, NE#1's motorcycle came close to her vehicle since she was unable to give him space to merge. NE#1 then stopped his motorcycle in the middle of the road in front of her and activated his lights.

Appearing visibly upset, NE#1 approached her and asked how she failed to see him, to which she replied that she could not see his turn signal, which left her unaware of his intent to change lanes. NE#1 then repeated his question and accused her of being under the influence of drugs. She believed NE#1's accusation was disingenuous and aimed at intimidating her because he did not investigate whether she was impaired. NE#1 took her license and registration and then informed her that she would receive a citation in the mail, despite his failure to explain the specifics of her traffic violation. Although her tabs were expired, she believed NE#1 had seen her new tabs clipped to her registration before she removed them and handed the registration to him. She later received citations for failing to yield to an emergency vehicle and expired tabs. She disputed the citation for failing to yield to an emergency vehicle, arguing that NE#1 did not activate his emergency lights or siren while he was stopped at the red-light intersection or when he tried to merge into her lane. She claimed that NE#1 only activated his lights after he had stopped in front of her.

B. Body-Worn Video (BWV)

NE#1's BWV captured the following:

NE#1 traveled in the middle lane of a road and stopped at a red-light intersection, positioned either beside the Complainant's vehicle or just slightly past the front right fender of the Complainant's vehicle.



The red arrow indicates the Complainant's vehicle, which was already stopped on the left lane of the road. Once NE#1 fully stopped, the Complainant's vehicle was no longer visible, suggesting that NE#1 was either beside it or just slightly past it.

NE#1 and the Complainant began accelerating, presumably in response to a green light. However, as the Complainant proceeded forward within her lane, NE#1 appeared to be veering diagonally toward the left lane, coming close to the Complainant's vehicle. NE#1 steered his motorcycle to the right.



NE#1 accelerated forward within his lane, merged ahead of the Complainant's vehicle while still in the intersection, and appeared to manipulate something in his right handlebar using his right hand,

which was covered by a black sleeve. NE#1 stopped his motorcycle shortly after passing through the intersection, dismounted, and switched off its engine. NE#1's motorcycle lights were flashing. NE#1 reinserted his right hand into the black sleeve and appeared to manipulate something again. NE#1's motorcycle lights then stopped flashing.

NE#1 approached the Complainant, who was parked behind him, and had the following conversation through her driver's side window:

NE#1: *Hey. Your driver's license, registration, and insurance. What are you doing?*

Complainant: *What do you mean? Going to work.*

NE#1: *Okay. How can you not see me?*

Complainant: *I'm sorry. I just – I wasn't sure. It seemed like a weird place to merge. I didn't see you – your blinker was being covered.*

NE#1: *Wait, that's not what we're talking about. You said you didn't see me. I said how could you not see me? You're at a stoplight. I'm directly in front of you.*

Complainant: *I'm sorry. I – I – I truly...*

NE#1: *So, have you been using drugs?*

Complainant: *No.*

NE#1: *Drinking? What?*

Complainant: *No. [The Complainant handed her driver's license to NE#1.]*

NE#1: *You haven't answered the question. How could you not see me?*

Complainant: *How am I supposed to answer that? I don't – I – okay, I saw your vehicle. I didn't realize you're turning in.*

NE#1: *That doesn't even make sense.*

Complainant: *How does that not make sense?*

NE#1: *I'm in front of you. Okay, registration and insurance. [The Complainant handed her registration and insurance to NE#1.]*

Complainant: *I apologize. I didn't – I really wasn't trying to be rude.*

NE#1: *Okay, you can put that away. [NE#1 handed the insurance to the Complainant, went to the rear of her vehicle, and returned to his motorcycle, where he entered her information into his computer. NE#1 then returned to the Complainant.]*

NE#1: *Alright, there's your license and registration. [NE#1 handed the Complainant her license and registration.] You'll get a citation in the mail you'll need to respond to. [NE#1 then returned to his motorcycle and deactivated his BWV.]*

C. Citations

NE#1 issued the Complainant two citations—one for expired tabs (Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 11.22.070(A)) and the other for failing to yield for an emergency vehicle (SMC 11.58.270).¹ Both citations included the following narrative:

I was stopped at a light, pulled in between a truck and the def[endant] behind me. When the light turned green I was intending on stopping the truck for a violation. When the light changed I pulled forward and activated my emergency lights. The def[endant] did not want me in front of her so she attempted to drive around my motorcycle. As I continued forward, the def[endant] was inches from the rear of my motorcycle, trying to force her way past me. I then stopped the def[endant]. The def[endant] first told me she did not see me, but then changed to that she could not see my signal, then said that she didn't think that was a normal way to merge. The def[endant] also had February 2025 tabs on her license plate.

D. OPA Interview

On August 27, 2025, OPA interviewed NE#1. He said he was conducting traffic emphasis patrols when he saw a truck perform an unlawful U-turn, prompting him to initiate a traffic stop. He said he approached the truck, which was stopped in the left lane at a red light. He said he was stopped in the right lane, with the Complainant's vehicle located behind him to his left. He said he activated his emergency lights and accelerated when the light turned green. He said the Complainant was required to yield to a marked police motorcycle displaying its emergency lights, regardless of her assertion that she did not see his signal. He admitted that he did not activate his siren. He said he tried to merge behind the truck, but she refused to let him enter. He claimed, "She pulled forward and at the rear of my box, inches from my box, as to push me off the lane, like I was just some citizen on the street trying to start a road rage." He clarified that she moved into his path as if she was deliberately "trying to run" him off the road. He believed she saw him and did not want him

¹ SMC 11.58.270(A) states, "Upon the immediate approach of an authorized emergency vehicle making use of audible and visual signals meeting the requirements of Section 11.82.520, or of a police vehicle properly and lawfully making use of an audible signal only the driver of every other vehicle shall yield the right-of-way and shall immediately drive to a position parallel to, and as close as possible to, the right-hand edge or curb of the roadway clear of any intersection and shall stop and remain in such position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a peace officer."

there, so she tried to maneuver him out of the way. He estimated himself to be about 12 feet ahead of the Complainant as he later merged in front of her.

NE#1 believed the Complainant initially told him that she did not see him and then changed her statement to indicate that she did not see his signal. He said his question regarding her possible drug or alcohol use was aimed at prompting her to clarify how she failed to see him. He clarified, "I asked the questions to basically give her an out. Give me some reason why maybe I wouldn't write you a ticket because there's a good excuse I have for what just happened." He did not believe his questioning was intimidating. He reiterated that he repeated his questions because he perceived her answers as inconsistent.

OPA asked NE#1 whether the following photograph depicted the black leather jacket he was wearing on the incident date.



OPA obtained this image from a website. The image depicts an arm patch that appeared to have been removed.

He said he was unable to recall what he was wearing on the incident date. He also denied removing the arm patches, clarifying that the jacket he received from SPD never included them.

Analysis and Conclusions:

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1

6.220 – Voluntary Contacts, Terry Stops, and Detentions, 6.220-POL-2 Conducting a Terry Stop, 1. Terry Stops are Seizures Based Upon Reasonable Suspicion

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 unlawfully detained her.

Terry stops are seizures of an individual and, as such, must be based on reasonable suspicion to be lawful. SPD Policy 6.220-POL-2(1). A *Terry* stop is a brief, minimally intrusive seizure of a subject based on reasonable articulable suspicion to investigate possible criminal activity. SPD Policy 6.220-POL-1. Reasonable suspicion means specific, objective, articulable facts, which, taken together with rational inferences, would create a well-founded suspicion that there is a substantial possibility that a subject has engaged, is engaging, or is about to engage in criminal conduct. *Id.* The reasonableness of a *Terry* stop is based on the totality of the circumstances, the officer's training and experience, and what the officer knew before the stop. *Id.* While information learned during the stop can lead to additional reasonable suspicion or probable cause that a crime has occurred, it cannot justify the original stop. *Id.*

BWV corroborated the Complainant's account of the incident, not NE#1's account. It showed NE#1 stopping either directly adjacent to the Complainant's vehicle or just slightly past it. When the light turned green, NE#1 immediately veered left toward the Complainant, requiring him to correct his steering to the right. NE#1 claimed that his emergency lights were activated when the light turned green, but BWV showed NE#1 most likely activating them much later—after he had accelerated past the Complainant, merged into her lane, and decelerated to a stop. During this deceleration, NE#1 was observed manipulating his handlebar inside the right black sleeve, presumably to activate his lights. This observation was consistent with the Complainant's account, in which she reported that NE#1's lights began flashing when he stopped his motorcycle in the middle of the road in front of her. He then dismounted, reinserted his hand into the same sleeve, and deactivated his lights. He also admitted to OPA that he did not activate his siren. Since objective BWV supported the Complainant's account, she had no duty to yield to NE#1 or pull over to the right-hand curb as required under SMC 11.58.270, as a preponderance of the evidence showed that NE#1 did not have his lights or siren activated at the time he nearly collided with her vehicle. Consequently, NE#1 lacked reasonable suspicion to detain the Complainant for failing to yield to an emergency vehicle.

Moreover, NE#1 later discovered the Complainant's expired tabs after he unlawfully detained her. He only became aware of these expired tabs after viewing her license plate during her detention. There was no evidence to indicate that he knew about the expired tabs when he reached the red-light intersection. NE#1 appeared focused on a truck ahead of him, as he admittedly intended to initiate a traffic stop on it for an alleged U-turn violation. Under the Washington State Constitution, the exclusionary rule asserts that evidence obtained during an unlawful traffic stop constitutes fruit of the poisonous tree and must be excluded from evidence.

NE#1's discovery of the Complainant's expired tabs would not have occurred but for his unlawful traffic stop on the Complainant for allegedly failing to yield to an emergency vehicle. Consequently, NE#1 lacked reasonable suspicion to detain the Complainant for expired tabs.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Sustained.

Recommended Finding: **Sustained**

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #2

5.001 – Standards and Duties, 5.001-POL-10. Employees Will Strive to be Professional

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 was unprofessional by suggesting that she was under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

SPD employees must “strive to be professional.” SPD Policy 5.001-POL-10. Further, “employees may not engage in behavior that undermines public trust in the Department, the officer, or other officers,” whether on or off duty. *Id.* Employees will avoid unnecessary escalation of events, even if those events do not end in reportable uses of force. *Id.* Any time employees represent the Department or identify themselves as police officers or Department employees, they will not use profanity directed as an insult or any derogatory, contemptuous, or disrespectful language toward anyone. *Id.*

OPA sustains this allegation based on a preponderance of the evidence. NE#1's line of questioning was unprofessional. NE#1's question about whether the Complainant was “using drugs” or “drinking” served solely to demean or insult her. NE#1 lacked any factual basis for posing that question, as the Complainant showed no signs of impairment, nor did NE#1 ever claim to have observed any signs of impairment. Moreover, NE#1's explanation to OPA for asking that question—“to basically give her an out”—was illogical. An admission from the Complainant that she was “using drugs” or “drinking” would have triggered an investigation into driving under the influence and exposed her to criminal charges. The Complainant would likely have denied “using drugs” or “drinking,” thereby undermining NE#1's reasoning for asking that question.

OPA also finds that NE#1 engaged in behavior undermining public trust in the Department and himself for the following reasons. First, NE#1's demeanor toward the Complainant was confrontational, as he questioned her actions, repeatedly asked how she could not see him, and suggested she might be “using drugs” or “drinking.” When she clarified that she did not see his blinker and was unaware of his merging, he retorted with, “That doesn't even make sense.” Second, NE#1 failed to identify himself or explain the reason for the traffic stop. Third, NE#1 misinterpreted the Complainant's statements by claiming, “You said you didn't see me. I said how could you not see me?” The Complainant did not say that. Specifically, she said, “I didn't see your – your blinker was being covered.” NE#1 misstated the Complainant's claim that she did not see his blinker. Fourth, NE#1 told the Complainant that she would receive a citation in the mail but failed to explain her alleged traffic violation. Instead, he walked away from the visibly surprised

and confused Complainant and then deactivated his BWV. Collectively, these actions were unprofessional and undermined public trust in the Department and himself.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Sustained.

Recommended Finding: **Sustained**

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #3

9.020 – Uniforms, 9.020-POL-5. All Outward Facing Uniform Items Include Proper Identifying Markings (Effective December 1, 2022)

NE#1's uniform allegedly lacked markings identifying NE#1 as a police officer.

All outward facing uniform items must include proper identifying markings. SPD Policy 9.020-POL-5 (effective December 1, 2022). Any shirt or jacket worn as the outermost layer of the sworn employee's uniform must contain a cloth nametag on the right-side chest of the uniform item. *Id.* Badges must be worn as described in the uniform reference catalog. *Id.*

NE#1 said he was unable to recall what he was wearing on the incident date. However, BWV showed NE#1 wearing a black leather jacket. If he had been wearing the jacket as depicted in the image above, it would have been compliant with policy. Although the shoulder patch appeared to have been removed, the jacket displayed NE#1's nametag on the right-side chest and an SPD badge with NE#1's badge number on the left-side chest. These patches, along with a clearly marked police motorcycle, would have identified NE#1 as a police officer. Overall, OPA found insufficient evidence to conclude that NE#1 wore a jacket on the incident date that violated policy.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded**