



September 21, 2021

Interim Chief Adrian Diaz
Seattle Police Department
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Chief Diaz:

Please see the below Management Action Recommendation.

Case Number

- 2017OPA-1085 / 2021COMP-0041 (related to MAR 2020COMP-0016)

Topic

- High Risk Vehicle Stops

Summary

- The complainant alleged that officers engaged in threatening and improper behavior when they conducted a high-risk vehicle stop (HRVS) of a van with a license plate that had been reported stolen.

Analysis

- The complainant was driving a van registered to a nonprofit organization for which she was volunteering. The named employees (NEs) were driving a patrol vehicle equipped with an Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR). The ALPR alerted the NEs to the van, which returned a years-old hit for a stolen license plate.
- The NEs conducted a HRVS. They ordered the occupants out of the van with their guns drawn in the low-ready position (pointed at the ground), handcuffed the driver and passenger, and backing officers searched the vehicle.
- OPA interviewed a Lieutenant in the Training Unit and the former Assistant Chief of the Patrol Operations Bureau, who confirmed the NEs actions were consistent with SPD training.
- Department training curriculum lacks any discussion about in what type(s) of a HRVS firearms should be drawn, or whether alternate tactics may be used by one or more officers conducting the stop without compromising officer safety.
- HRVS are reasonable suspicion detentions that significantly impose on a person's liberty, yet SPD does not have a policy that governs such tactics.
- OPA has issued two previous MARs on this topic: one in [2018](#) and another in [2020](#).

Recommendation(s)

- Create a policy under SPD Manual Title 6 governing HRVS to provide guidance on the requirements and limitations of such stops, including when it is appropriate for officers to conduct felony-level stops.
- Amplify HRVS training to provide examples of stops in which it may be unnecessary to draw firearms or where alternate tactics exist that ensure both officer and public safety.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I look forward to your response.



Sincerely,

AM

Andrew Myerberg
Director, Office of Police Accountability