



City of Seattle

Office of Professional Accountability

November 4, 2014

Chief Kathleen M. O'Toole
Seattle Police Department
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

RE: MANAGEMENT ACTION RECOMMENDATION (14-IS-0128)

Dear Chief O'Toole:

A recent Office of Professional Accountability (OPA) investigation pointed out the need for the Seattle Police Department (SPD) to improve its methods and processes for ensuring that SPD officers appear in court as required by subpoena. In particular, it appears that current SPD processes do not adequately notify supervisors in a timely fashion when employees fail to appear as witnesses in court. Given our mutual desire to reinforce the important role that sergeants play in holding officers accountable, I feel confident you will agree with me that sergeants need to know as soon as possible if officers who report to them are not showing up to court as required.

In the OPA case that gave rise to this recommendation, an officer assigned to the Traffic Division missed numerous court appearances without his supervisor being made aware of the problem. Had the sergeant been made aware, he or she would have had the opportunity to determine the reason for these failures to appear and correct any misunderstanding on the part of the officer. In any case, timely feedback to the sergeant would have resulted in behavioral correction by the officer. Instead, the problem persisted for months without the supervisor being aware that a problem even existed.

If I or any member of the OPA staff can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Pierce Murphy
Director, Office of Professional Accountability