



Pursuit South of Seattle

In case [2018OPA-0238](#), multiple officers engaged in a pursuit that originated in Seattle and proceeded into South King County. The pursuit began when a vehicle that officers believed had been involved in an earlier shooting eluded them. The pursuit was eventually terminated by a South Precinct Lieutenant, and the involved patrol officers disengaged. However, multiple officers, including those assigned to SWAT and K-9, drove south of Seattle, located the vehicle, and employed PIT maneuvers. The vehicle again got away and another pursuit ensued, this time on a highway with substantial traffic. The K-9 officer used a PIT maneuver that caused the subject vehicle to collide with a car from oncoming traffic.

An Assistant Chief requested that FIT investigate the case because of potential serious misconduct, including insubordination and dishonesty. The case was also referred to OPA. OPA investigated 15 named employees with multiple allegations and ultimately found that:

- The first pursuit, although later determined to have been based on incorrect information, was justified.
- The initial PIT maneuvers used were consistent with policy.
- The SWAT and K-9 officers were not bound by the South Precinct Lieutenant's termination order because their direct supervisor authorized them to engage in a pursuit, if necessary.
- The PIT maneuver used by the K-9 officer violated the use of force policy and vehicle tactic policies because, even if reasonable and necessary, it was not proportional as the potential for harm outweighed the risk posed by the subject vehicle.
- The allegations of insubordination and dishonesty were unfounded except for those against the SWAT lieutenant, which were deemed inconclusive.

Reasonable Use of Force

In case [2017OPA-0895](#), the Named Employees responded to a report of a male walking down the street assaulting people. When officers approached, the subject struck Named Employee #1 (NE#1) and yelled "who wants it!" Named Employee #2 (NE#2) gave a Taser warning, but the subject continued to advance, so the officer used his Taser. The subject, now on the ground, continued to fight with the officers until he was taken into custody. During the struggle, NE#1 struck the subject about ten times with his baton, jabbed him multiple times with a baton, and kicked him. NE#2 used five Taser applications (two of which were faults) and two knee strikes.

OPA recognized that the Named Employees used a high level of force but reasoned that the subject's behavior was dangerous, assaultive, and showed a disregard for the safety of himself and others. OPA ultimately found that the force used was reasonable, necessary, and proportional, and therefore issued not sustained findings for all allegations against the Named Employees.

If you have questions, feedback, content requests, or to add/remove your name from this distribution list, please email andrew.myerberg-OPA@seattle.gov or anne.bettesworth@seattle.gov.



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