



## How Disciplinary Decisions Are Reached

Officers often ask OPA how decisions are reached regarding what discipline to impose on officers. While each case is unique, below is a general outline of what happens if the OPA Director recommends sustained findings on one or more allegations.

1. OPA routes the case in Blue Team to the Named Employee's (NE) chain of command for review.
2. A Discipline Committee—which includes the Assistant Chief of the NE's bureau, the NE's Captain, an Assistant City Attorney assigned to SPD, a rep from SPD Human Resources, and the OPA Director—meets, discusses the details of the case, and aims to reach consensus on the recommended findings.
3. If consensus is reached, the Committee discusses a disciplinary recommendation based on a synopsis of the NE's discipline history, recent performance reviews, and a summary of cases that have similar fact patterns and in which similar allegations were sustained. While rare, if consensus is not reached, OPA and the chain of command make separate recommendations to the Chief of Police on findings and discipline.
4. The Assistant City Attorney drafts a proposed Disciplinary Action Report (DAR) that reflects the recommendation of the Committee; it is served on the NE and the NE's union.
5. If the proposed DAR includes a suspension or termination, the NE can speak to the Chief in a Loudermill hearing, which is also attended by the Deputy Chief and/or the NE's Assistant Chief, the OPA Director, an Assistant City Attorney, a union rep, and, if the NE chooses, other individuals who may offer support.
6. The Chief makes a final determination as to whether OPA's recommended findings should be sustained and, if so, what discipline should be imposed. The Chief can impose discipline within the range\* suggested by the Committee or above/below that range. The Chief may also disagree with the recommended findings and, if she does so, is required to write a letter to public officials explaining the basis for that disagreement.
7. The Chief signs a final DAR and it is served on the union and the NE.

\*For employees represented by SPOG, recommended discipline that includes suspensions is generally set forth in a range (e.g., one to three days or written reprimand to two days). This is intended to give the Chief discretion depending on the presentation of the NE and the union at the Loudermill hearing.

## Statistics on Discipline Imposed

In 2019, OPA sustained findings in 57 cases. This included a total of 125 sustained allegations against 56 unique employees, with eight employees receiving discipline in more than one OPA investigation. The table below lists the disciplinary actions taken as of February 13, 2020.

Final Disciplinary Action Report Pending	9
Oral Reprimand	10
Written Reprimand	15
Suspension <sup>1</sup>	18
Resigned Prior to Discipline <sup>2</sup>	6
Resigned Prior to Termination <sup>3</sup>	3
Retired in Lieu of Termination	1
Termination	4
<b>Total Disciplinary Actions</b>	<b>66</b>

<sup>1</sup> Three officers received two suspensions each in 2019. A fourth officer was later terminated under a different OPA investigation.

<sup>2</sup> Four employees resigned prior to discipline; one of those employees had discipline pending in three cases.

<sup>3</sup> Two employees resigned prior to termination; one of those employees would have been terminated in two cases.

If you have questions, feedback, content requests, or to add/remove your name from this distribution list, please contact Anne Bettsworth, OPA Deputy Director of Public Affairs, at [anne.bettesworth@seattle.gov](mailto:anne.bettesworth@seattle.gov).