



Seattle Office of Police Accountability

March 15, 2019

Chief Carmen Best
Seattle Police Department
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Chief Best:

Please see the below Management Action Recommendation.

Case Number

- 2018OPA-0582

Topic

- Roadblocks

Summary

- The Named Employee used his patrol vehicle to partially block a road, which was identified as potentially being an out-of-policy roadblock.

Analysis

- *SPD Policy 13.031-POL-13* states that “intentional vehicle-to-vehicle contacts are prohibited as pursuit-ending tactics except as justified under the use of force policy.” A roadblock as defined by the Force Review Unit exists when the vehicle blocks the entirety of the street, not just a portion. OPA notes that this definition is not contained in policy. Moreover, OPA is unaware of whether the Department has explained this distinction in the Emergency Vehicles Operations Course or other training.
- *SPD Policy 8.300-POL-7* concerns vehicle-related force tactics and states that such tactics may only be used when objectively reasonable. The policy discusses three types of vehicle-related force tactics, including: Pursuit Immobilization Technique maneuvers, the use of stop sticks, and ramming. Notably, this policy does not discuss roadblocks, even though roadblocks are a vehicle-related force tactic that officers are trained on and use.

Recommendation(s)

- Define roadblock in policy, provide guidance on when its use is appropriate, and clarify whether a roadblock only exists where the vehicle blocks the entirety of the road or whether a roadblock is present where the vehicle is blocking a portion or the majority of the road.
- Modify *SPD Policy 8.300-POL-6* to include reference to roadblocks and to classify roadblocks as a vehicle-related force tactic that may only be used when objectively reasonable under the totality of the circumstances.

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

Sincerely,

AM

Andrew Myerberg
Director, Office of Police Accountability