



Seattle Office of Police Accountability

February 12, 2025

Chief Shon F. Barnes
Seattle Police Department
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Chief Barnes:

Please see the below Management Action Recommendation.

Case Number

- 2023OPA-0399 / 2025COMP-0001

Topic

- Firearm Storage

Summary

- The Named Employee (NE) stored his department-issued firearm and other police equipment in the back of his vehicle in an unsecured parking lot overnight.
- The NE's vehicle, firearm, and other police equipment were stolen.
- OPA determined the NE neglected to properly store his firearm.

Analysis

- SPD Policy 9.060-POL-5 required sworn employees to store department-authorized firearms "properly."
 - The Policy elaborates: "Sworn employees are responsible for taking reasonable precautions that their department-authorized firearms are safely stored. Sworn employees will store department-authorized firearms in such a manner as to prevent loss or access to prohibited or unauthorized persons."
- The Policy does not provide any guidance concerning reasonable precautions or safe storage of department-authorized firearms.
 - SPD's Force Investigation Team (FIT) investigated NE's actions. The FIT chain of command noted SPD Policy 9.060-POL-5 could benefit from further clarification, specifically concerning whether storage in locked vehicles without a separate, secure trunk is considered secure.
- Washington State Law defines unsafe storage of a firearm as storing or leaving "a firearm in a location where the person knows, or reasonably should know, that a prohibited person may gain access to the firearm."¹
 - State law further defines "secure gun storage" as "a locked box, gun safe, or other secure locked storage space that is designed to prevent unauthorized use or discharge of a firearm; and the act of keeping an unloaded firearm stored by such means."²

¹ RCW 9.41.360 (Unsafe Storage of a firearm).

² RCW 9.41.010(39).



- However, State law requires that a loaded pistol shall not be kept unattended within a vehicle unless “the pistol is locked within the vehicle and concealed from view from outside the vehicle.”³
- The International Association of Chiefs of Police passed a resolution in support of member programs that safely store firearms, new technologies that assist in safe storage, and officers being role models in safe firearm storage.⁴
- OPA reviewed select policies from comparable cities that provide more specific guidance such as Portland,⁵ San Francisco⁶ and Sacramento.⁷

Recommendations

- SPD should revise its policy to provide more specific guidance for safely storing firearms in unattended vehicles.
- In making any revisions, SPD should review the prior issues raised in two prior OPA Management Action Recommendations ([2022COMP-0007](#); [2022COMP-0009](#)) and more specific policies outlined in comparable cities.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Glenn
Interim Director, Office of Police Accountability

³ RCW 9.41.050(2)(a).

⁴ International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). 2003. 105th Annual Conference. Salt Lake City, UT. Available at <https://www.theiacp.org/resources/resolution/security-of-firearms>.

⁵ Portland Police Bureau. Administrative Rules Adopted by Bureaus pursuant to Rule Making Authority. Policy 1020.00 Weapons Administration. Available at <https://www.portland.gov/policies/police-directives/weapons-ammunition-equipment-1000/102000-weapons-administration> (setting strict requirements for securing firearms in City vehicles).

⁶ San Francisco Police Department. General Order 10.02. Available at https://www.sanfranciscopolice.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/SFPDGeneralOrder_10_02_20240530.pdf (concerning “Firearms Security in Vehicles”).

⁷ Sacramento Police Department. General Order 580.04, Firearms. Available at <https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/content/dam/portal/police/Transparency/policy/GO/Section-500/GO-58004-Firearms-011023.pdf> (referencing compliance with California Penal Code Section 25140 for storage of handguns in unattended vehicles).