


Issued Date: November 23, 2025

From: Acting Deputy Director Nelson R. Leese (on behalf of Director Bonnie J. Glenn)¹
Office of Police Accountability 

Case Number: 2025OPA-0227

Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings

Named Employee #1

- 1. Allegation #1:** 8.200 – Using Force, 8.200-POL-1. Using Force: When Authorized
Finding: Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper
 - 2. Allegation #2:** 8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn ...
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded
 - 3. Allegation #3:** 5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage ...
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded
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Named Employee #2

- 1. Allegation #1:** 8.200 – Using Force, 8.200-POL-1. Using Force: When Authorized
Finding: Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper
 - 2. Allegation #2:** 8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn ...
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded
 - 3. Allegation #3:** 5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage ...
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded
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Named Employee #3

- 1. Allegation #1:** 8.200 – Using Force, 8.200-POL-1. Using Force: When Authorized
Finding: Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper
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¹ The OPA Director may designate a civilian OPA Deputy Director to “perform such duties and have such powers as the OPA Director may prescribe and delegate.” Seattle Ordinance 125315, Council Bill 118969, subchapter I, section 3.29.100(B).

2. **Allegation #2:** 8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn ...
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded
 3. **Allegation #3:** 5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage ...
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded
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Named Employee #4

1. **Allegation #1:** 8.200 – Using Force, 8.200-POL-1. Using Force: When Authorized
Finding: Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper
 2. **Allegation #2:** 8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn ...
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded
 3. **Allegation #3:** 5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage ...
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded
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This Closed Case Summary (CCS) represents the opinion of the OPA Director regarding the misconduct alleged and therefore sections may be written in the first person.

Executive Summary:

On May 27, 2025, SPD officers, including the named employees (NE#1 through NE#4), responded to a crowd control incident at Seattle City Hall, where a religious group organized a rally that was countered by protesters supporting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community. The Complainant alleged that the named employees used unauthorized force when taking down Counter Protester #1 (CP#1), failed to de-escalate before using force, and exhibited bias against the LGBTQ community.

Administrative Note:

The Complainant filed four email complaints related to this incident. These were based on the Complainant's observations of video from the incident, not first-hand knowledge. Several allegations claimed officers were not wearing identification as required. OPA determined these allegations were unfounded and processed them as contact logs. OPA investigated the Complainant's allegations related to use of force, de-escalation, and biased policing.

On October 24, 2025, the Office of Inspector General certified OPA's investigation as thorough, timely, and objective.

Summary of the Investigation:

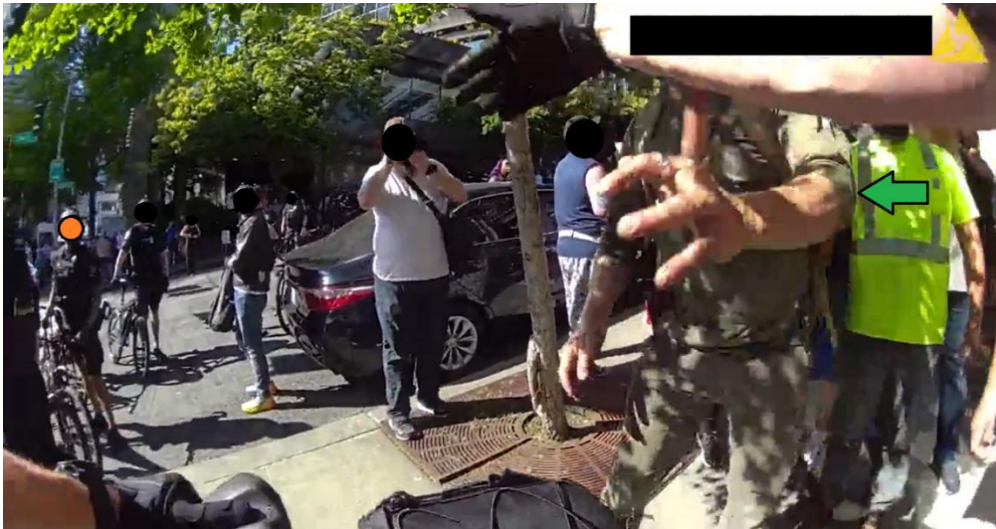
On June 3, 2025, the Complainant filed an OPA complaint. Among other details, it stated that CP#1 was thrown to the ground while turned away from an officer and did not pose a threat to the officer or others. It opined that the force used exceeded *de minimis* and was likely to “cause a head injury.” OPA also interviewed the Complainant on June 17, 2025. He maintained that the force used was neither reasonable nor necessary.

OPA investigated the complaint by reviewing the computer-aided dispatch call report, body-worn video (BWV), incident reports and supplements, use-of-force reports, media video and photograph, and interview statements.

According to incident, supplement, and use-of-force reports, SPD officers were conducting crowd control at Seattle City Hall, where a security guard refused CP#1 access to an entrance that would have led to the site of the religious group’s rally. These reports indicated that NE#3, standing beside the security guard, instructed CP#1 to leave.

BWV² captured the following:

NE#3 placed his hand on CP#1’s left shoulder and guided him away from the entrance he was trying to access. In response, CP#1 swatted at NE#3’s arm.



This image shows CP#1, indicated by the green arrow, swatting NE#3’s arm away. CP#1’s left middle finger contacted NE#3’s right arm.

NE#1 and NE#2 promptly approached and grabbed CP#1. In response, CP#1 pushed NE#2 with both hands, propelling NE#2 into the counter protesters and police bicycles behind him.

² The images that follow were taken from NE#3’s BWV.



This image shows CP#1 using both hands to push NE#2, indicated by the blue circle. NE#1, indicated by the orange circle, is holding CP#1 from behind.

NE#1 brought CP#1 down to the ground, but CP#1 extended his arms in a position akin to a push-up, preventing his stomach from contacting the ground.



This image shows CP#1 extending his arms in a position akin to a push-up while being brought down to the ground. NE#4, indicated by the purple circle, quickly approached.

NE#1, NE#2, and NE#4 grabbed CP#1 while he was lowered to the ground. NE#1 kned CP#1's abdominal area. NE#1 shouted, "You're under arrest for assault," to which CP#1 retorted, "No, I'm not, mother fucker!" The officers maneuvered CP#1 onto his back, but CP#1 wrapped his right arm around a tree, prompting NE#1 to shout, "Get your arms out!" The officers rolled CP#1

onto his stomach, restrained him against the ground, positioned his arms behind his back, and handcuffed him.

On September 17, 2025, OPA interviewed NE#1, NE#3, and NE#4. On October 1, 2025, OPA interviewed NE#2. Their accounts were consistent with the evidence summarized above. During NE#3's interview, NE#3 said the religious group and the LGBTQ group required separation to prevent violence, which was the rationale for denying CP#1 entry. NE#3 said he guided CP#1 away from the entrance. During NE#1's interview, NE#1 said he grabbed CP#1 after CP#1 swatted NE#3's arm. NE#1 said he brought CP#1 to the ground in a controlled manner after CP#1 pushed NE#2. NE#1 said he kned CP#1 to prevent further assaults and overcome CP#1's resistance. During NE#2's and NE#4's interviews, NE#2 and NE#4 characterized their force as *de minimis* control holds against CP#1.

The named employees described CP#1 as assaultive, actively resistant, and noncompliant. They believed de-escalation was no longer feasible once CP#1 assaulted NE#3. They denied allegations of bias against the LGBTQ community. They noted that their tactical decision-making for this protest was informed by assaults occurring at a prior protest.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1

8.200 – Using Force, 8.200-POL-1. Using Force: When Authorized

The Complainant alleged that the named employees used unauthorized force when taking down CP#1.

Sworn employees will only use objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional force to the threat or urgency of the situation to achieve a law enforcement objective while protecting the life and safety of all people. SPD Policy 8.200(1). Reasonableness must consider that sworn employees are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force necessary in a particular situation in tense, uncertain, dynamic, and rapidly evolving circumstances. *Id.* The question is whether the sworn employee's actions were objectively reasonable considering the facts and circumstances confronting them, without regard to their underlying intent or motivation. *Id.* Several factors should be weighed when evaluating reasonableness. *See id.* Force is necessary under the totality of the circumstances when there is no reasonably effective alternative to using physical or deadly force, and the type and amount of physical or deadly force used is a reasonable and proportional response to effect the legal purpose intended or to protect against the threat posed to the sworn employee or others. SPD Policy 8.050 (effective September 1, 2024). Proportional force must reflect the totality of circumstances of the situation, including the nature and immediacy of any threats posed to sworn employees and others. *Id.* Sworn employees must rely on training, experience, and their assessment of the situation to decide an appropriate level of force. *Id.*

The named employees did not use unauthorized force as alleged. CP#1 was not thrown to the ground in a way that exceeded *de minimis* force³ and likely caused a head injury. Rather, BWV showed CP#1 extending his arms in a position akin to a push-up while being brought to the ground, preventing his head from contacting the ground. To the extent that NE#1, NE#2, and NE#4 used force by maneuvering CP#1 onto his stomach, such force was objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional under the circumstances. The force was objectively reasonable and necessary because CP#1 posed a threat to the named employees after having just assaulted two of them and actively resisted a lawful arrest. The force used was proportional and *de minimis*, involving control holds, maneuvering CP#1 onto his stomach, and positioning his arms behind his back to facilitate handcuffing. The named employees modulated their force once they secured CP#1 in handcuffs.

Although NE#3 did not participate in the arrest, his attempt to guide CP#1 away from the entrance was *de minimis*, lawful, and proper, as CP#1 refused to leave after being ordered to do so. During the arrest, NE#1 kned CP#1's abdominal area—a higher level of force. However, OPA finds that this force was objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional for the same reasons noted above. CP#1 was confrontational, escalatory, and noncompliant. He had just obstructed and arguably assaulted NE#3, assaulted NE#2, and actively resisted arrest by maintaining a push-up position after being brought to the ground. At this point, a higher level of force was authorized to overcome CP#1's active resistance, break down CP#1's posture, and effect a lawful arrest. Despite being kned, CP#1 announced, "No, I'm not, mother fucker" when told that he was under arrest for assault. CP#1 showed no signs of willingly surrendering. Overall, NE#1 used lawful and proper force in response to CP#1's level of resistance.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper**

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #2

8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn Employees Will Use De-Escalation Tactics to Reduce the Need for Force

The Complainant alleged that the named employees failed to de-escalate before using force.

³ *De minimis* force is an action meant to separate, guide, and/or control without using control techniques that are intended to, or are reasonably likely to, cause pain or injury. Examples include, but are not limited to, using hands or equipment to stop, push back, separate, or escort, and using compliance holds without using sufficient force to cause pain. SPD Policy 8.050 (eff. September 1, 2024).

When safe, feasible, and without compromising law enforcement priorities, sworn employees will use de-escalation tactics to reduce the need for force. SPD Policy 8.100-POL-1. Team approaches to de-escalation are encouraged and will consider sworn employee training and skill level, the number of sworn employees, and whether any sworn employee has successfully established rapport with the subject. *Id.* The totality of the circumstances should guide de-escalation options purposed for voluntary compliance through communication, time, distance, and shielding. *Id.*

SPD's overall response to the protest demonstrated communication, time, and distance. SPD established zones for the opposing groups and communicated expectations to both groups, including the requirement to remain separated. Despite these established rules, CP#1 attempted to access an entrance leading to the site of the religious group's rally. When a security guard and NE#3 denied CP#1's entry and directed him to leave, CP#1 instead obstructed and arguably assaulted NE#3, and assaulted NE#2. The named employees were authorized to use force at this point due to CP#1's unlawful conduct warranting his arrest. Given these circumstances and the need to ensure the safety of the officers and others, OPA finds that further de-escalation efforts were no longer safe, feasible, and consistent with law enforcement priorities.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded**

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #3

5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing

The Complainant alleged that the named employees exhibited bias against the LGBTQ community.

Biased policing means the different treatment of any person by officers motivated by any characteristic of protected classes under state, federal, and local laws, as well as other discernible personal characteristics of an individual. SPD Policy 5.140-POL. It includes different treatment based on sexual orientation or gender identity. *See id.* Officers are forbidden from making decisions or taking actions influenced by bias and expressing prejudice or derogatory comments concerning discernible personal characteristics. *See* SPD Policy 5.140-POL-2.

This allegation is unfounded. SPD officers, including the named employees, were on site to support all people's rights to free speech and peaceably assemble, while also enforcing the law by protecting all people from harm. The named employees directed their attention on CP#1 due to his conduct, not his discernible personal characteristics. Objective BWV showed NE#3 attempting to guide CP#1 away from the entrance, which led to CP#1 obstructing NE#3 and assaulting NE#2. The named employees executed a lawful arrest in response to CP#1's actions, not bias against the LGBTQ group. Overall, OPA found no evidence of bias impacting the named employees' decision to arrest CP#1.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded**

Named Employee #2 – Allegation #1

8.200 – Using Force, 8.200-POL-1. Using Force: When Authorized

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper**

Named Employee #2 – Allegation #2

8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn Employees Will Use De-Escalation Tactics to Reduce the Need for Force

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #2, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded**

Named Employee #2 – Allegation #3

5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #3, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded**

Named Employee #3 – Allegation #1

8.200 – Using Force, 8.200-POL-1. Using Force: When Authorized

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper**

Named Employee #3 – Allegation #2

8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn Employees Will Use De-Escalation Tactics to Reduce the Need for Force

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #2, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded**

Named Employee #3 – Allegation #3

5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #3, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded**

Named Employee #4 – Allegation #1

8.200 – Using Force, 8.200-POL-1. Using Force: When Authorized

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper**

Named Employee #4 – Allegation #2

8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn Employees Will Use De-Escalation Tactics to Reduce the Need for Force

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #2, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded**

Named Employee #4 – Allegation #3

5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing

For the reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #3, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded**