

Issued Date: November 24, 2025

From: Interim Deputy Director Nelson Leese (on behalf of Interim Director Bonnie Glenn)
Office of Police Accountability 

Case Number: 2025OPA-0233

Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings

Named Employee #1

- 1. Allegation #1:** 6.010 – Arrests, 6.010-POL-1. Sworn Employees Must Have Probable Cause That a Subject has Committed a Crime in Order to Effect an Arrest

Finding: Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper (Expedited)

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:

SPD officers, including Named Employee #1 (NE#1), responded to a protest occurring near a federal building. The Complainant alleged NE#1 lacked probable cause to arrest him for obstruction.

Administrative Note:

This case was approved for Expedited Investigation. That means OPA, with the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) agreement, believed it could issue a recommended finding based solely on its intake investigation without interviewing the named employee. As such, OPA did not interview the named employee in this case.

On July 22, 2025, OIG certified OPA's investigation as thorough, timely, and objective.

Summary of the Investigation:

OPA investigated this incident by reviewing the OPA complaint, computer-aided dispatch call report, body-worn video, and incident, supplement, and use-of-force reports. The Complainant did not respond to OPA's request for an interview. Based on these records, a preponderance of the evidence showed the following:

On June 11, 2025, protesters gathered at a federal building in downtown Seattle for an “ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) out” protest. Protesters obstructed traffic and caused property damage, including setting a commercial dumpster ablaze. SPD officers responded and were instructed to de-escalate and disengage. When the protesters launched ignited fireworks at the officers, a dispersal order was issued. The officers formed a line and repeatedly ordered the protesters to “move back.” Most protesters complied with the dispersal order, while a few did not.

The Complainant ran past NE#1 on a sidewalk and toward the rear of multiple bicycle officers, who continually shouted, “Move back!” As the Complainant quickly approached these officers, he shouted, “You move back!” NE#1 alerted the bicycle officers about the Complainant’s rapid approach. Two officers intercepted the Complainant and arrested him for obstruction.

Analysis and Conclusions:

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1

6.010 – Arrests, 6.010-POL-1. Sworn Employees Must Have Probable Cause That a Subject has Committed a Crime in Order to Effect an Arrest

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 lacked probable cause to arrest him for obstruction.

Sworn employees must have probable cause that a subject committed a crime before executing an arrest. SPD Policy 6.010-POL-1. Stated differently, where an arrest is not supported by probable cause, it violates law and Department policy. Probable cause exists when the facts and circumstances within a sworn employee’s knowledge sufficiently support a reasonable belief that an offense has been or is being committed. See *State v. Fricks*, 91 Wash.2d 391, 588 P.2d 1328 (1979); *State v. Gluck*, 83 Wash.2d 424, 426–27, 518 P.2d 703 (1974).

NE#1 had probable cause to arrest the Complainant for obstruction. After a lawful dispersal order was issued, the officers repeatedly ordered the protesters to “move back.” The Complainant defied this order and appeared to taunt the officers by yelling, “You move back!” while rapidly approaching the rear of multiple bicycle officers, who were conducting crowd control. The Complainant’s disobedience to lawful orders, as well as conduct posing a risk to the bicycle officers, constituted obstruction, justifying his arrest.

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

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Lawful and Proper (Expedited)**

Footnote 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).