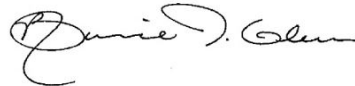


**Issued Date:** December 22, 2025

**From:** Director Bonnie Glenn  
Office of Police Accountability



**Case Number: 2025OPA-0269**

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## **Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings**

### **Named Employee #1**

- 1. Allegation #1: 5.140 - Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2 Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing**

**Finding:** Not Sustained - Inconclusive

- 2. Allegation #2: 5.001 - Standards and Duties POL-10. Employees Will Strive to be Professional**

**Finding:** Sustained

- **Imposed Discipline: Written Reprimand**
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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:**

The Complainant alleged Named Employee #1 (NE#1) was unprofessional and engaged in bias-based policing during a dispute over parking ticket jurisdiction.

### **Administrative Note:**

During its intake, OPA identified a potential issue of NE#1's supervisor (Supervisor #1) not forwarding the Complainant's allegations to OPA. OPA processed this allegation as a Supervisor Action. See OPA Internal Operations and Training Manual section 5.4(B)(ii) (Supervisor Actions generally involve a minor policy violation or performance issue the employee's supervisor addresses through training, communication, or coaching).

On November 13, 2025, OIG certified OPA's investigation as thorough, timely, and objective.

### **Summary of the Investigation:**

The Complainant in this case is a manager for Seattle Center, which operates Seattle's Waterfront Park. NE#1 is a Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO). This case concerns a dispute the two had regarding which agency had jurisdiction over parking permitting and enforcement for Railroad Way Plaza, a side street adjacent to Waterfront Park.

OPA searched for, but could not locate, any corroborative video or paperwork. OPA's investigation consisted of interviews with the Complainant, four witnesses, Supervisor #1, and NE#1. OPA also reviewed an email written by an SPD Captain that referenced the dispute. The email appeared to have been written days after the dispute had concluded following a meeting that included Witness #1.

The Complainant alleged that, on June 25, 2025, Seattle was hosting international soccer events, managed by FIFA. She received a report that a FIFA representative (Witness #4, who was later determined to be unaffiliated with FIFA) raised a sponsorship issue with a promotional vehicle parked along Railroad Way. The Complainant said she responded to the scene and met with Witness #4, explaining that the promotional vehicle had the proper permits to remain. The Complainant recalled that, afterwards, NE#1 approached her and informed her he would be citing the promotional vehicle. The Complainant said she explained to NE#1 that the vehicle had the proper permits and was allowed to park where it was. The Complainant alleged NE#1 responded by saying, "Who are you to say that to me?" The Complainant said she identified herself and extended her hand. The Complainant described NE#1 looking her up and down and not shaking her hand. The Complainant stated that Witness #1—a uniformed security officer—explained to NE#1 that the Complainant oversaw the park. The Complainant said NE#1 responded, "Who are you for me to be talking to, looking like that?"

Witness #1 stated he is a uniformed lieutenant with Seattle Center's Emergency Services Unit. Witness #1's recollection of events was generally consistent with the Complainant's. Witness #1 stated that, because the park is new, he frequently educates other agencies concerning the park's jurisdiction. Witness #1 stated SPD

officers on scene raised certain concerns and doubts, so he asked the Complainant—the park manager—to come to explain. Witness #1 stated the Complainant identified herself and explained she had authority to issue parking permits for the street and had done so for the promotional vehicle. Witness #1 described the SPD officers on scene as understanding. But, Witness #1 said NE#1 arrived later, briefly spoke to an SPD sergeant, then declared he would be ticketing and towing the vehicles that were present. Witness #1 said the Complainant “very politely, like with a big smile on her face” identified herself and extended her hand. Witness #1 said NE#1 “totally disregarded” her and said something like, “why would I speak to someone who looks like you?” or “why would I talk to someone like you, who looks like you?” Witness #1 described the moment as “stunning” and causing him to have a “physical reaction” based on how “egregious” it was. Witness #1 explained the Complainant is a female of East Indian descent. Witness #1 stated NE#1’s statements, “appeared to be racial.” Witness #1 stated the Complainant tried again to engage politely with NE#1, but he stated something to the effect of “I’m not discussing anything with you,” before turning to walk away. Witness #1 stated, at this point, he approached NE#1 to de-escalate. Witness #1 described NE#1 as still dismissive but recalled NE#1 stating something to the effect of, “Finally, I can deal with you.” Witness #1 also recalled Witness #4 reacting to NE#1’s statements, including by saying, “Hey, you can’t talk like that.”

Witness #2 is a Senior Planning and Development Specialist with Seattle Public Utilities. Witness #2’s description of events was generally consistent with that of Witness #1 and the Complainant. Witness #2 described NE#1’s reaction to the Complainant extending her hand as, “talking over her,” without acknowledging her hand. Witness #2 stated NE#1’s behavior did not appear motivated by bias due to race, but elaborated: “I think it was more, for lack of better words, ignorance on his part, because he is an older man, and he’s white and he’s like a grandpa, you know?” Witness #2 elaborated further: “It was rude. But I am thinking, ‘why is he being so rude? This is going to be a problem.’ And [the Complainant] was offended, because she was just totally dismissed, because he was just talking over her.”

Witness #3 is a Seattle Center Management Adviser. Witness #3’s recollection of events was generally consistent with that of the Complainant and Witnesses #1 and #2. Witness #3 described NE#1 as speaking to the Complainant with a “blatant lack of respect.” Witness #3 recalled NE#1 refusing to shake the Complainant’s hand and “saying something along the lines of, you know, ‘how can I take you seriously

when you look like that?” Witness #3 observed a lack of respect for the Complainant’s organizational position, whereas NE#1 was “open to speaking” with Witness #1, a white man. Witness #3 described NE#1’s comment about the Complainant’s appearance as “kind of shocking,” but that she “didn’t quite understand what he was referencing in particular.” Witness #3 elaborated, “I think that, like that broad comment gave us pause. Everyone who was around there, and I might not be remembering exactly what he said, but I do recall, like that moment where everybody was like, ‘What do you mean by that?’”

Witness #4 said he was working with a local business during the event. Witness #4 reported a variety of logistical hurdles, noting overwhelmingly positive experiences with SPD and other City agencies. However, Witness #4 described NE#1 as “aggressive,” dismissive, and “authoritarian,” but noting he could, “easily chalk that up to someone having a very bad day and passing along that bad day to others.” Witness #4 stated he did not believe NE#1’s behavior was rooted in bias, noting his perception that NE#1 was dismissive and terse with both the Complainant and Witness #1. Witness #4 said he could not recall any specific commentary made by NE#1 but said NE#1 made comments specifically to the Complainant that “raised eyebrows.” He elaborated, “And I mean, it raised my eyebrows as well. And, you know, myself and others stepped in to try to diffuse the situation.” Witness #4 also recalled NE#1 refusing to shake the Complainant’s hand. Witness #4 stated NE#1 told the Complainant something to the effect of, “You don’t have any authority down here.”

Supervisor #1 stated he was not working on the date of the incident but learned of it five days later during his next shift. Supervisor #1 stated he received emails and had a phone call with the Complainant, which were consistent with the above information. Supervisor #1 stated he asked NE#1 about the incident, and that NE#1 recounted no one told him beforehand that they were City employees or that the vehicle was permitted to be there. Supervisor #1 stated they only later learned or confirmed the Complainant was empowered to issue lawful permits. Supervisor #1 stated NE#1 described those present on scene as confrontational, so NE#1 made the decision to issue a citation. According to Supervisor #1, NE#1 does not typically answer questions when writing a citation to avoid distraction, but that NE#1 only learned the Complainant was a City employee after the citation was written. According to Supervisor #1, NE#1 said the Complainant made a comment like “no

hard feelings” and tried to shake his hand or fist bump, but NE#1 does not shake hands while on duty.

NE#1 described his recollection of the incident as diminished, but broadly described a promotional truck parked on the sidewalk. NE#1 denied making a comment along the lines of “Who are you to say that to me?” NE#1 stated he does not shake hands to community members he is citing because it could create the appearance of impropriety as if “they’re trying to ingratiate themselves and prevent me from doing my full duty.” NE#1 stated that, depending on the circumstances, he may shake a community member’s hand. NE#1 denied being aggressive or disrespectful. NE#1 also denied engaging in bias-based policing, stating he perceived the Complainant to be white and that, to the extent he treated Witness #1 any differently, he likely was showing respect for his uniform. NE#1 recalled another unidentified PEO as being present. NE#1 described himself and the other PEO as being “deflated” because the Complainant only identified herself as having issued a permit after the fact and that the “hullabaloo” could have been avoided had the Complainant identified herself at the beginning.

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## **Analysis and Conclusions:**

### **Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1**

#### ***5.140 - Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2 Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing***

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 treated her differently due to her race or gender.

SPD policy prohibits biased policing, which it defines as “the different treatment of any person by officers motivated by any characteristic of protected classes under state, federal, and local laws as well other discernible personal characteristics of an individual.” SPD Policy 5.140-POL. This includes different treatment based on the race or gender of the subject. See *id.* Officers are forbidden from both, (i) making decisions or taking actions influenced by bias, and (ii) expressing any prejudice or derogatory comments concerning personal characteristics. See SPD Policy 5.140 POL-2.

OPA has serious concerns about NE#1’s behavior on the date of incident. These are addressed more fully below in Allegation #2. Ultimately, there is insufficient evidence for OPA to conclude NE#1’s misconduct was, more likely than not, motivated by the Complainant’s race or gender. In addition to NE#1 denying these allegations, two witnesses (Witness #2 and Witness #4) characterized NE#1’s behavior as appearing to be rude but not necessarily motivated by bias. Witness #2 attributed NE#1’s behavior as “dismissive” and based in ignorance with how he was treating the Complainant. Witness #4 described perceiving NE#1 treating the Complainant—a woman of color—similarly to Witness #1—a white man in a City uniform. Witness #1 noted certain

differences but also described NE#1 as treating him dismissively as well. Supervisor #1 also partially corroborated that NE#1 generally does not shake hands with community member's while on duty. Moreover, there was no objective evidence to suggest NE#1's behavior was motivated by animus against a particular characteristic of the Complainant—those present speculated it could be race-based, gender-based, or both. Witness #3—who described a difference between how NE#1 treated the Complainant versus Witness #1—also described not understanding what NE#1 was referencing and that those present sought clarification by what NE#1 meant by his comments.

However, OPA also cannot ignore the appreciable evidence suggesting NE#1's behavior could have been motivated by the Complainant's race, gender, or both. Multiple people described NE#1 making a dismissive comment about the Complainant's appearance. Even witnesses who did not characterize NE#1's comments as biased suggested NE#1 was "talking over" the Complainant, "dismissed" her, appeared "ignorant," and made comments that "raised eyebrows." Given the totality of circumstances, it is certainly plausible NE#1's behavior was motivated by the Complainant's race, gender, or both.

Accordingly, OPA recommends this allegation be Not Sustained – Inconclusive.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Inconclusive**

### **Named Employee #1 – Allegation #2**

#### **5.001 - Standards and Duties POL-10. Employees Will Strive to be Professional**

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 was unprofessional.

SPD Policy 5.001-POL-10 requires that SPD employees "strive to be professional." The policy further instructs that "employees may not engage in behavior that undermines public trust in the Department, the officer, or other officers" whether on or off duty. SPD Policy 5.001-POL-10. Additionally, the policy instructs Department employees to "avoid unnecessary escalation of events even if those events do not end in reportable uses of force." *Id.* Furthermore, the policy states: "Any time employees represent the Department or identify themselves as police officers or Department employees, they will not use profanity directed as an insult or any language that is derogatory, contemptuous, or disrespectful toward any person." *Id.*

The evidence is overwhelming that NE#1 spoke and behaved in an unprofessional manner with the Complainant. Even recognizing that this situation was somewhat complicated, NE#1 is expected to work through disagreements courteously and in a manner that builds trust in the integrity of the department. This is true while engaging with anyone. Instead, the Complainant, three other City employees, and a community member witness all noted NE#1's rude, dismissive, and authoritarian behavior. OPA also finds that, more likely than not, NE#1 made a dismissive comment about the Complainant's appearance that was "stunning" (Witness #1), "a problem" (Witness #2), "shocking" (Witness #3), and "raised eyebrows" (Witness #4). Even if OPA cannot prove this comment was motivated by bias—as opposed to simple frustration or desire to insult—it was unprofessional beyond the pale to suggest he could disregard the Complainant due to her appearance.

OPA also finds NE#1 displayed a stunning unwillingness to explain his actions or deviate from an "officious or overbearing attitude," see SPD Policy 5.001-POL. Had he done so, he might have

prevented this complaint even if he had issued a wrongful citation. Had NE#1 explained his reasoning for wanting to issue a citation, he could have been open to feedback from the Complainant or Witness #1—a uniformed City security supervisor—concerning why that was in error. Similarly, when the Complainant introduced herself, he could have engaged in that conversation. Even if he did not want to shake the Complainant’s hand—an allowable if perhaps uncommon personal boundary in contemporary Seattle professional culture—he could have explained his reasons for refusing to do so. In short, even if he had decided to issue a citation, he could have treated those present with dignity and respect, politely referring them to parking enforcement supervisors if there was a mere jurisdictional disagreement.

Accordingly, OPA recommends this allegation be Sustained.

Recommended Finding: **Sustained**