


Issued Date: December 20, 2025

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

Case Number: 2025OPA-0274

Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings

Named Employee #1

- 1. Allegation #1:** 6.220 – Voluntary Contacts, Terry Stops, and Detentions, 6.220-POL-2 Conducting a Terry Stop, 2. During a Terry Stop, Officers Will Limit the Seizure to a Reasonable Scope

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:

Named Employee #1 (NE#1) conducted a traffic stop on the Complainant for performing an unlawful left turn. During the stop, NE#1 ordered the Complainant to exit the vehicle. The Complainant alleged that NE#1 exceeded the scope of a *Terry* stop by ordering him to exit the vehicle.

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 August 14, 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 infraction report. Based on these records, a preponderance of the evidence showed the following:

On July 8, 2025, NE#1 conducted a traffic stop on the Complainant, approached him, and explained the reason for the stop. After the Complainant provided pertinent documentation, he expressed dissatisfaction with NE#1's "unnecessary questions" regarding the traffic stop, to which NE#1 replied that he was investigating the incident. NE#1 then opened the Complainant's door and ordered him to exit the vehicle due to the Complainant's lack of cooperation. The Complainant initially refused but then exited the vehicle and sat on a patrol car bumper, as instructed. Officers observed a firearm in the Complainant's vehicle. Later, NE#1 told the Complainant that he would receive a citation via mail. NE#1 released the Complainant after reviewing his concealed pistol license.

Analysis and Conclusions:

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1

6.220 – Voluntary Contacts, Terry Stops, and Detentions, 6.220-POL-2 Conducting a Terry Stop, 2. During a Terry Stop, Officers Will Limit the Seizure to a Reasonable Scope

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 exceeded the scope of a *Terry* stop by ordering him to exit the vehicle.

Officers must limit a seizure to a reasonable scope. SPD Policy 6.220-POL-2(2). Actions indicating to a reasonable person that he or she is being arrested or indefinitely detained may convert a *Terry* stop into an arrest. *Id.* The policy lists possible actions—such as ordering a motorist to exit the vehicle and directing him to sit on a patrol car bumper—indicating to a reasonable person that he or she is being arrested. Still, it specifies that the occurrence of any one of these actions would not necessarily convert a *Terry* stop into an arrest. *See id.* Officers must have additional articulable justification for further limiting a person's freedom during a *Terry* stop unless the reasons for the initial stop justify it. *Id.*

Ordering the Complainant to exit his vehicle was lawful and proper under SPD policy as well as federal and state case law. *See Pennsylvania v. Mimms*, 434 U.S. 106 (1977) (police officers may order a driver out of a lawfully stopped vehicle to ensure officer safety); *see also State v. Mendez*, 137 Wash.2d 208, 970 P.2d 722 (1999) (same). Here, the Complainant became argumentative and uncooperative during the traffic stop, prompting NE#1 to order him out of the vehicle. The Complainant sat on a patrol car bumper while NE#1 ran his information. Despite the Complainant's lack of cooperation, his detainment was brief and limited to a reasonable scope. He was released shortly after being informed that he would receive a citation via mail.

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).