


Issued Date: January 4, 2026

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

Case Number: 2025OPA-0287

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 (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:

Boeing Employees' Credit Union (BECU) security handcuffed the Complainant for causing a disturbance. Named Employee #1 (NE#1) arrived and replaced security's handcuffs with his own. The Complainant alleged that NE#1 "assaulted" her by applying handcuffs that caused pain and bruising to her wrist.

Administrative Note:

The Complainant alleged multiple instances of SPD misconduct, including unprofessional behavior, damage to her property, and failure to investigate her claim of assault by BECU security. OPA did not find any evidence to suggest potential misconduct in these areas. Accordingly, OPA processed these allegations as a Contact Log.²

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 11, 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, incident report, and interview statements from the Complainant. Based on these records, a preponderance of the evidence showed the following:

NE#1 and a backing officer responded to a BECU store, where the Complainant was handcuffed and restrained on the ground by two BECU security guards. One security guard reported that the Complainant refused to leave and assaulted him when he tried escorting her out. NE#1 advised the Complainant that she was being arrested for assault, removed the handcuffs, applied his own handcuffs, and secured them with a double lock. The Complainant did not express any pain during this process but was belligerent and requested hospitalization. Seattle Fire Department (SFD) personnel arrived and placed the Complainant onto a gurney. During this maneuver, the Complainant expressed pain from the handcuffs, prompting NE#1 to remove them. SFD personnel then transported the Complainant away from the scene.

Analysis and Conclusions:

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1

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

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 “assaulted” her by applying handcuffs that caused pain and bruising to her wrist.

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-POL-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.*

NE#1 did not apply unauthorized force throughout his encounter with the Complainant. When NE#1 developed probable cause for assault, he handcuffed the Complainant, who did not express any

pain at the time. While awaiting SFD's arrival, the Complainant continually shouted and berated NE#1 and his backing officer. As soon as SFD personnel lifted the Complainant, she expressed pain from the handcuffs, prompting NE#1 to immediately remove them. Based on the circumstances, the pain was brief, promptly addressed by NE#1, and *de minimis*³ at most. To the extent NE#1 used force on the Complainant at all, it was lawful and proper.

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).

Footnote 2. A complaint may be classified as a Contact Log if, among other things, it “does not involve a potential policy violation by an SPD employee.” See OPA Internal Operations and Training Manual section 5.4(B)(i).

Footnote 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. SPD Policy 8.050 (effective September 1, 2024). An example includes discomfort from wearing handcuffs. SPD Policy 8.400-POL-1.