


Issued Date: January 6, 2026

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

Case Number: 2025OPA-0306

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:

Named Employee #1 (NE#1) responded to a call involving a residential burglary occurring in an apartment building where the Complainant resided. The Complainant identified Community Member #1 (CM#1)—who was assisting NE#1 and other SPD officers in reaching the correct floor—as someone who had been trespassed from the building. The Complainant alleged that NE#1 used unauthorized force by pushing him away while near the elevator.

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 26, 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:

On July 26, 2025, NE#1 and multiple SPD officers responded to a call regarding an in-progress residential burglary at an apartment building. CM#1 entered an elevator while Witness Officer #1 (WO#1) remained nearby, awaiting backing officers. The Complainant told WO#1 that CM#1 was trespassed from the building. WO#1 replied that this was not the appropriate moment to address that issue. NE#1 arrived at the elevator and ordered the Complainant to “back up.” The Complainant began recording on his phone and insisted on CM#1’s removal while standing near the elevator. As more backing officers arrived, NE#1 gently pushed the Complainant away with her left hand while reiterating her command to “back up.” The officers then entered the elevator.

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 used unauthorized force by pushing him away.

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’s push constituted lawful and proper force. Despite being told to drop the minor concern regarding CM#1’s purported trespass status, the Complainant persisted in addressing it while the officers prioritized the in-progress burglary call that required immediate attention. NE#1’s force was objectively reasonable and necessary to prevent the Complainant from blocking the officers’ access to the elevator. NE#1’s force was also proportional, brief, nonreportable, and *de minimis*.²

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. *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). 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. *Id.*