


Issued Date: February 10, 2026

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

Case Number: 2025OPA-0337

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 - Unfounded (Expedited)
 - 2. Allegation #2:** 8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn Employees Will Use De-Escalation Tactics to Reduce the Need for Force
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded (Expedited)
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Named Employee #2

- 1. Allegation #1:** 8.200 – Using Force, 8.200-POL-1. Using Force: When Authorized
Finding: Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper (Expedited)
 - 2. Allegation #2:** 5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing
Finding: Not Sustained - Unfounded (Expedited)
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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:

Named Employee #1 (NE#1) arrested Community Member #1 (CM#1), the Complainant's son, for burglary. The Complainant alleged that NE#1 exhibited racial bias against Black people and failed to de-escalate by pushing her. The Complainant also alleged that Named Employee #2 (NE#2), an unknown officer, used unauthorized force against CM#1 and exhibited racial bias against him.

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 recommended findings based solely on its intake investigation without interviewing the named employees. As such, OPA did not interview the named employees in this case.

On October 3, 2025, OIG certified OPA's investigation as thorough, timely, and objective.

Summary of the Investigation:

OPA investigated this incident by reviewing the OPA complaint, body-worn video, incident report, and interview statements from the Complainant. These records reflected the following:

On August 21, 2025, NE#1 and his backing officer responded to the Complainant's home following a 911 caller reporting an in-progress burglary. Upon arrival, NE#1 promptly detained CM#1 in handcuffs and then interviewed the Complainant and her husband, CM#1's stepfather, on the porch. The front door and window showed damage. The Complainant reported that CM#1, her son who did not live there, attempted to force entry. She also added that CM#1 used drugs and had mental health conditions. The husband corroborated the Complainant's account and showed NE#1 a video of the attempted entry. NE#1 informed CM#1 of his arrest and subsequently Mirandized him.

The Complainant expressed frustration regarding the officers' decision to arrest CM#1, rather than to hospitalize him. She alleged that CM#1's arrest was racially motivated. A vehicle on the driveway belonged to CM#1's friend but was driven by CM#1. Despite being instructed to stay away from the vehicle, the Complainant, while agitated, attempted to enter it. NE#1 pushed the Complainant away, causing her to move backward.

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 exhibited racial bias against Black people.

Biased policing means the different treatment of any person by officers motivated by any characteristic of protected classes under state, federal, and local laws, as well as other discernible personal characteristics of an individual. SPD Policy 5.140-POL. It includes different treatment based on race. See *id.* Officers are forbidden from making decisions or taking actions influenced by bias and expressing prejudice or derogatory comments concerning discernible personal characteristics. See SPD Policy 5.140-POL-2.

This allegation is unfounded. OPA found no indication of race impacting NE#1's enforcement decisions. Although the Complainant wanted CM#1 hospitalized rather than arrested, NE#1 had probable cause to arrest CM#1 for attempted burglary. NE#1 also attempted to explain his rationale for making an arrest rather than hospitalizing CM#1 under the circumstances to the Complainant. NE#1 conducted an objective and thorough investigation into the incident and ultimately established probable cause for a crime, justifying his decision to arrest CM#1. Overall, OPA found no evidence of bias.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded (Expedited).

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded (Expedited)**

Named Employee #1 – Allegation #2

8.100 – De-Escalation, 8.100-POL-1. When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Sworn Employees Will Use De-Escalation Tactics to Reduce the Need for Force

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 failed to de-escalate by pushing her.

When safe, feasible, and without compromising law enforcement priorities, sworn employees will use de-escalation tactics to reduce the need for force. SPD Policy 8.100-POL-1. Team approaches to de-escalation are encouraged and will consider sworn employee training and skill level, the number of sworn employees, and whether any sworn employee has successfully established rapport with the subject. *Id.* The totality of the circumstances should guide de-escalation options purposed for voluntary compliance through communication, time, distance, and shielding. *Id.*

De-escalation was no longer feasible when the Complainant attempted to enter the vehicle parked on her driveway, in defiance of NE#1's instruction to stay away from it. The vehicle was unlawfully parked on the driveway and potentially contained evidence of a crime. NE#1's push, which constituted *de minimis* force² at most, achieved a legitimate law enforcement objective by separating the Complainant from the vehicle. The Complainant's allegation that she fell from the push was disproved by body-worn video.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded (Expedited).

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded (Expedited)**

Named Employee #2 – Allegation #1

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

The Complainant alleged that NE#2, an unknown officer, used unauthorized force against CM#1.

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.*

There was no evidence of any SPD officer using unauthorized force against CM#1 throughout the officers' encounter with him. To the extent that the officers used *de minimis* force by handcuffing CM#1 and escorting him into a patrol vehicle, such force was lawful and proper. Although CM#1 appeared to have lost his balance and fell from the patrol vehicle at one point, this did not occur from an officer using force against him.

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

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

Named Employee #2 – Allegation #2

5.140 – Bias-Free Policing, 5.140-POL-2. Officers Will Not Engage in Bias-Based Policing

The Complainant alleged that NE#2 exhibited racial bias against CM#1.

This allegation is unfounded for the same reasons articulated in Named Employee #1 – Allegation #1. SPD officers, including NE#1, conducted an objective and thorough investigation. SPD's enforcement action against CM#1 was based on establishing probable cause for a crime, not bias against CM#1's race. Moreover, an acting sergeant screened the arrest and the Complainant's bias allegations. OPA did not identify any officer potentially using excessive force on CM#1, so any bias-based policing allegation predicated on the alleged use of excessive force would similarly be unfounded. Overall, OPA found no evidence supporting the Complainant's interpretation of race-based mistreatment.

Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded (Expedited).

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained – Unfounded (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.*