


**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-0353

---

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

#### **Named Employee #1**

- 1. Allegation #1:** 6.010 – Arrests, 6.010-POL-1. Sworn Employees Must Have Probable Cause That a Subject has Committed a Crime in Order to Effect an Arrest  
**Finding:** Not Sustained - Lawful and Proper (Expedited)
  - 2. Allegation #2:** 15.180 – Primary Investigations, 15.180-POL-5. Officers Shall Document all Primary Investigations on a Report  
**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, who was ultimately arrested. The Complainant alleged that NE#1 unlawfully arrested him and inaccurately documented in the police report that the incident was recorded on video.

#### **Administrative Note:**

During its intake investigation, OPA identified NE#1 failing to notify the Complainant that he was being recorded and failing to exhaust reasonable alternatives before impounding the Complainant's vehicle. OPA sent NE#1's potential violations of SPD Policy 16.090-POL-2(1) (Notification of Recording) and SPD Policy 6.120-POL-7 (Sworn Employees Exhaust Reasonable Alternatives Prior to Impounding Vehicles Operated by Drivers in Certain Situations) to his chain of command for Supervisor Action.<sup>2</sup>

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 employee. As such, OPA did not interview the named employee in this case.

On October 29, 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 (BWV), in-car video (ICV), incident report, and email correspondence from the Complainant. These records reflected the following:

On June 20, 2025, NE#1 initiated a traffic stop on the Complainant's vehicle due to a missing rear license plate. However, the Complainant took nearly one minute to pull over. NE#1 approached and ordered the Complainant to exit the vehicle while also informing him that he was not under arrest, but the Complainant refused to exit. The Complainant also refused to provide his driver's license upon request and insisted that he had not committed a crime. NE#1 opened the door, removed the Complainant from the vehicle, and handcuffed him with assistance of a backing officer. NE#1 informed the Complainant that he was being arrested for obstruction and then Mirandized him.

When NE#1 ran the Complainant's vehicle identification number (VIN), NE#1 learned that the Complainant had not transferred the title after purchasing the vehicle.

### **Analysis and Conclusions:**

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

#### **6.010 – Arrests, 6.010-POL-1. Sworn Employees Must Have Probable Cause That a Subject has Committed a Crime in Order to Effect an Arrest**

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 unlawfully arrested him.

Sworn employees must have probable cause that a subject committed a crime before executing an arrest. SPD Policy 6.010-POL-1. Stated differently, where an arrest is not supported by probable cause, it violates law and Department policy. Probable cause exists when the facts and circumstances within a sworn employee's knowledge sufficiently support a reasonable belief that an offense has been or is being committed. See *State v. Fricks*, 91 Wash.2d 391, 588 P.2d 1328 (1979); *State v. Gluck*, 83 Wash.2d 424, 426–27, 518 P.2d 703 (1974).

NE#1 developed probable cause for three independent crimes. First, NE#1 developed probable cause for obstruction when the Complainant refused to exit the vehicle. NE#1 had legitimate safety

concerns to justify ordering the Complainant to exit the vehicle due to his unwillingness to immediately pull over. 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). Second, NE#1 developed probable cause for the Complainant's failure to provide a driver's license. See RCW 46.61.020 (failure to produce a driver's license is a misdemeanor). Third, NE#1 developed probable cause for the Complainant's failure to transfer the title when NE#1 ran the VIN. See SMC 11.22.025 (failure to transfer the title within 45 days is a misdemeanor). Thus, NE#1 lawfully arrested the Complainant.

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

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

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

#### **15.180 – Primary Investigations, 15.180-POL-5. Officers Shall Document all Primary Investigations on a Report**

The Complainant alleged that NE#1 inaccurately documented in the police report that the incident was recorded on video.

Officers must document all primary investigations in a report. SPD Policy 15.180-POL-5. All reports must be complete, thorough, and accurate. *Id.*

NE#1's police report stated that his BWV and ICV were activated at the time of the incident. This was an accurate statement, as OPA reviewed both BWV and ICV during this investigation.

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 Supervisor Action generally involves a minor policy violation or performance issue the employee's supervisor addresses through training, communication, or coaching. See OPA Internal Operations and Training Manual section 5.4(B)(ii).