



Seattle Office of Police Accountability

March 13, 2019

Chief Carmen Best
Seattle Police Department
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Chief Best:

Please see the below Management Action Recommendation.

Case Number

- 2018OPA-0704

Topic

- De-Escalation

Summary

- Named Employee threatened to shoot a fleeing suspect. The Named Employee asserted that this threat served as a form of de-escalation. OPA disagreed and believed that this statement potentially violated *SPD Policy 8.100 (1) – When Safe, Feasible, and Without Compromising Law Enforcement Priorities, Officers Shall Use De-Escalation Tactics in Order to Reduce the Need for Force.*

Analysis

- OPA concluded that threats run contrary to many of the de-escalation tools named in the policy, including, most notably: “Using verbal techniques, such as Listen and Explain with Equity and Dignity (LEED) Training, to calm an agitated subject and promote rational decision making.”
- While recognizing that threats could constitute an effective law enforcement tactic, OPA disagreed that they constitute de-escalation.
- OPA believed that, instead, such threats were purposeful escalations of incidents that serve to impose compliance through fear of harm or force, and in some situations, amplify a situation and increase the likelihood that force will be used.

Recommendation(s)

- The Department should revise the language of *SPD Policy 8.100* to make clear that threats, including threats of force, do not constitute a de-escalation tactic.
- A similar recommendation was issued in case 2018OPA-0577.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

AM

Andrew Myerberg
Director, Office of Police Accountability