



Seattle Office of Police Accountability

November 7, 2022

Chief Adrian Diaz
Seattle Police Department
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Chief Diaz:

Please see the below Management Action Recommendation.

Case Number

- 2022OPA-0042 / 2022COMP-0015

Topic

- Deadly Force Clarification

Summary

- The Named Employee (NE) used deadly force on a community member armed with an edged weapon in defense of another police officer. The NE used deadly force after the community member fatally stabbed a police dog (K-9) deployed to apprehend the community member.

Analysis

- During his Force Investigation Team (FIT) interview, the NE stated he almost shot the community member to protect the K-9.
- FIT noted, “it appears there may be a widespread misunderstanding of law and SPD’s position on the use of deadly force to protect a police K-9 that should be addressed.”
- In its review of this incident, the Force Review Board (FRB) concurred with FIT’s recommendation that the Training Unit work with the K-9 Unit to develop a training module on this topic.
- OPA issued a prior MAR for a factually similar situation, where a K-9’s life was factored into an officer’s response to a community member armed with an edged weapon. *See* [2020OPA-0519 \(2021COMP-0039\)](#).
- [SPD Policy 8.200-POL-4](#) states: “Deadly force may only be used in circumstances where a threat of death or serious physical injury to the officer **or others** is imminent.” (Emphasis added)

Recommendation(s)

- Provide a department-wide eDirective making it clear officers may only use deadly force to defend human beings.
- Develop a training module as recommended by FIT and FRB.
- Consider amending SPD Policy 8.200-POL-4 to clarify that “or others,” refers to human beings, not animals or property.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gino Betts".

Gino Betts
Director, Office of Police Accountability
