



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CHIEF OF POLICE

FRANK STRAUB, Ph.D.

July 14, 2014

Mr. Timothy Burns
Ombudsman
City of Spokane
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99201

Mr. Burns:

I am in receipt of your correspondence dated June 25, 2014, in which you recommend a change to Spokane Police Department Policy 300.6 and 300.7.

I have carefully considered your recommendation as well as the pertinent materials, such as official police reports, the administrative review process and findings, photographs, and other materials. After my review, I believe the Spokane Police Department Internal Affairs Unit investigated this matter in an appropriate manner, and that the review and findings are consistent with policy. I also believe no changes are warranted to Policies 300.6 and 300.7 at this time.

As you are aware the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) is conducting a thorough review of the Spokane Police Department's use of force policies and practices as part of the collaborative reform process. That review will include Policies 300.6 and 300.7 and the Department will be guided by their recommendations.

I take exception to your inference that the Spokane Police Department's interpretation of use of force is "liberal." I would argue that it is anything but liberal and that the Spokane Police Department documents uses of force consistent with the best practices of the profession, and at times exceeds those standards as evidenced by the Department's willingness to quickly adapt and implement your recommendation that all instances in which an officer points his/her weapon at an individual be considered a use of force. During their most recent site visit, the COPS team was struck by the fact that we documented "weapon pointing" and indicated they were unaware of any other department that documented this "category" of use of force.

I am also concerned with your inference that care was not given to the person referenced in your correspondence. The person did receive care for his injury (an abrasion) when he was booked into the Spokane County Jail which is consistent with policy.



Thank you for your comments and recommendations. I, and the Spokane Police Department, greatly appreciate your role in providing independent oversight to the Department and look forward to future collaboration to improve our business practices. I would ask however, that you refrain from broad statements and inferences which create an inappropriate impression of the Spokane Police Department and its officers.

Sincerely,



Frank G. Straub, Ph.D.
Chief of Police

CC: David Condon, Mayor John Snyder, Public Safety Committee Chair
Theresa Sanders, City Administrator Tim Szambelan, OPO Attorney
Nancy Isserlis, City Attorney Mary Muramatsu, Police Attorney
Ben Stuckart, City Council President Marty Martin, Use of Force Commission Chair
