

# OVERVIEW OF CITIZEN OVERSIGHT OF THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Accountability Review Panel  
July 30, 2007

Kathryn Olson  
OPA Director

Seattle Police Department



# Seattle's Hybrid System of Civilian Oversight

- Office of Professional Accountability (OPA)
- OPA Auditor
- OPA Review Board (OPARB)

Seattle Police Department



## OPA AUDITOR

- Individual appointed by Mayor
- Reviews open internal investigation files
- Has advisory authority as to classification and investigation
- Issues semi-annual public reports
- Current Auditor is Kate Pflaumer

Seattle Police Department



## OPA REVIEW BOARD

- Three volunteer citizen members appointed by City Council
- Reviews random and selected closed OPA cases
- Resolves disputes between the OPA Director and the OPA Auditor about the scope of investigations
- Issues semi-annual public reports
- Current members are Peter Holmes, Brad Moericke, and Sheley Secrest

Seattle Police Department



## FUNCTIONS OF OPA

- Complaint Review and Investigation
- Policy Review
- Outreach

Seattle Police Department



## MANAGEMENT OF OPA

- Civilian Director
- Supported by Associate Director and Administrative Assistant
- Appointed by Mayor and confirmed by Council
- Appointed to 3-year term; may be reappointed to second and final 3-year term
- Administers and oversees OPA Investigation Section (OPA-IS)
  - Captain of OPA-IS reports to Director

Seattle Police Department



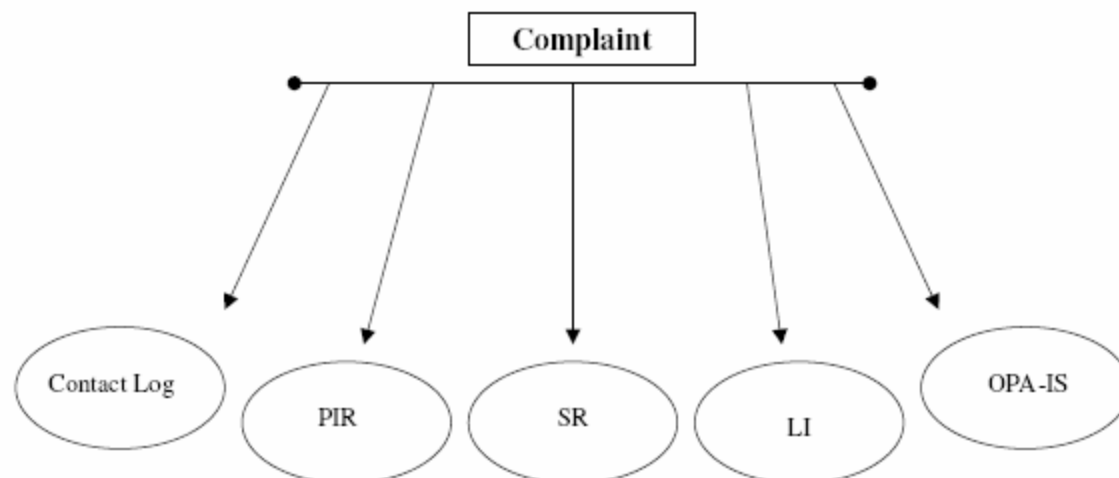
## AUTHORITY and INDEPENDENCE

- Access and report to Chief of Police
- Review intake, classification and investigation
- Certify Findings
- Chief of Police retains authority over final disposition and discipline for sustained complaints
- Director also has independent reporting obligations to Mayor and City Council
- Special Inquiries/Reviews
- Policy and training recommendations

Seattle Police Department



## TRIAGE AND REVIEW WHEN A COMPLAINT IS FILED WITH THE OPA



**Contact Log:** Contacts which do not involve misconduct, requests for information, referrals, etc.

**PIR:** Preliminary Investigation Report - complaints involving conduct that would not constitute misconduct; referred to the employee's supervisor for review.

**SR:** Supervisory Referrals - complaints that, even if events occurred as described, signify a training gap instead of misconduct. The complaint is referred to the employee's supervisor for review, counseling, and training as necessary.

**LI:** Line Investigations - complaints involving minor misconduct are investigated by the officer's chain of command.

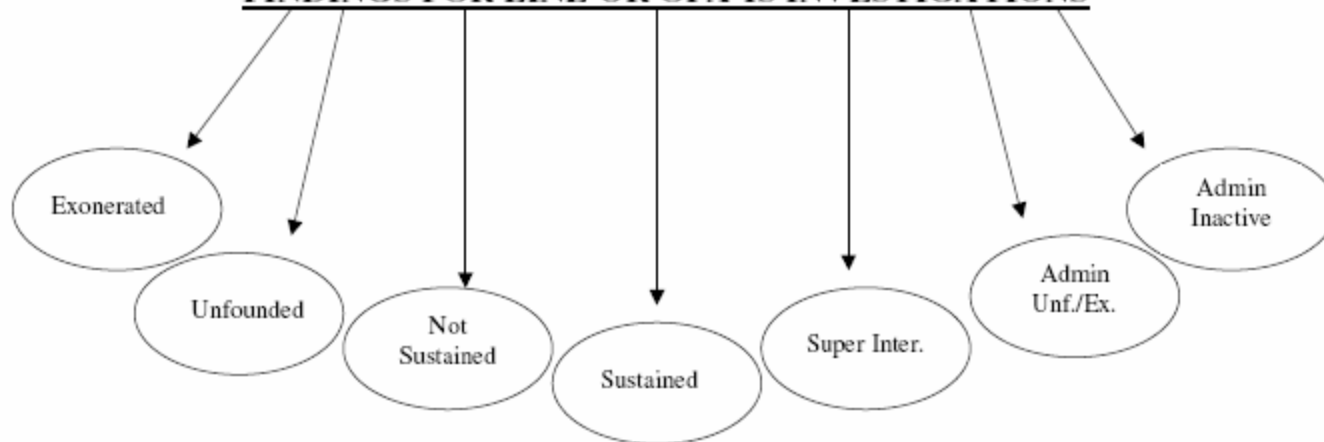
**OPA-IS:** OPA Investigation Section - complaints that are more complex and involve more serious allegations, including all use of force allegations, are investigated by OPA-IS.

Intake is done by the Intake Sergeant or one of the other Sergeants assigned to the OPA. Following intake, the Lieutenant makes an initial recommendation as to complaint classification. The classification recommendation is then reviewed by the Captain, the OPA Director, the OPA Auditor, and the Chief of Police.

# Seattle Police Department



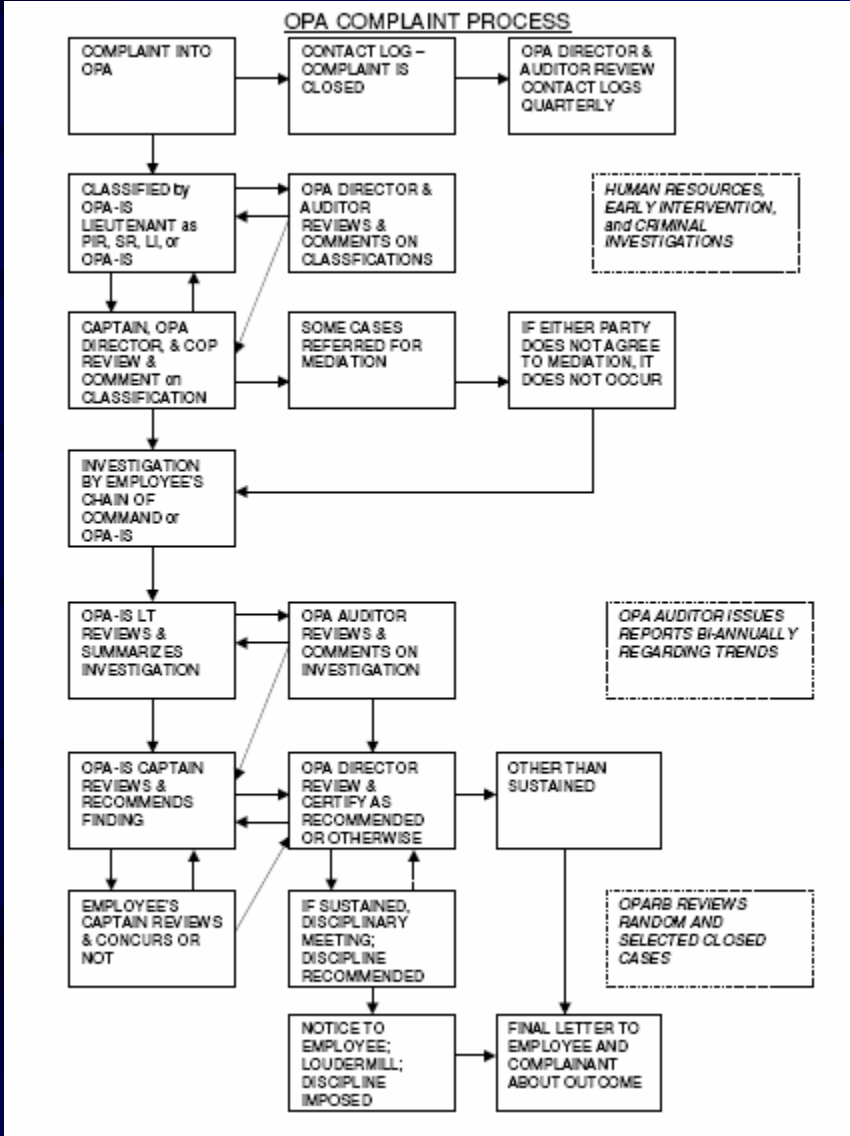
## FINDINGS FOR LINE OR OPA-IS INVESTIGATIONS



<u>Exonerated:</u>	A preponderance of the evidence indicates the conduct alleged occurred, but the conduct was justified, lawful and proper.
<u>Unfounded:</u>	A preponderance of the evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or is false.
<u>Not Sustained:</u>	The allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence.
<u>Sustained:</u>	The allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.
<u>Supervisory Intervention:</u>	While there may have been a violation, it was not willful and/or the violation did not amount to misconduct. The employee's chain of command is to provide appropriate training, counseling.
<u>Administratively Unfounded/ Exonerated:</u>	A finding made prior to the completion of the investigation that the complaint is significantly flawed procedurally or legally; or without merit; i.e., the complaint is false or the subject recants the allegations, preliminary investigation reveals wrong employee identified, or the employee's actions were found to be justified, lawful and proper and according to training.
<u>Administratively Inactivated:</u>	The investigation cannot proceed forward, usually due to insufficient information or the pendency of other investigations. The investigation may be reactivated upon the discovery of new, substantive information or evidence.

# Seattle Police Department





Seattle Police Department



## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- OPA legislation at Seattle Municipal Code 3.28.700 et seq.
- OPA Website: [www.seattle.gov/police/opa](http://www.seattle.gov/police/opa)
- OPA Monthly Reports:  
[www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/opa](http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/issues/opa)
- Recent Reports/information:  
[www.seattle.gov/police/opa/publications](http://www.seattle.gov/police/opa/publications)

Seattle Police Department

