



December 14, 2020

Interim 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**

- 2020OPA-0303 / 2020COMP-0016

**Topic**

- High-Risk Vehicle Stops

**Summary**

- The complainant alleged that officers improperly stopped him because of his race, drew guns on him, and lied about their reasons for their actions.

**Analysis**

- The named employee (NE) observed a vehicle driving with an equipment violation. A search of the vehicle's license plate returned a record for a stolen front license plate that was off by one digit. The NE and backing units conducted a high-risk vehicle stop (HRVS) that included officers approaching the complainant's vehicle with their firearms drawn in the low ready position. Afterward, the dispatcher advised that the vehicle's license plate was not reported stolen.
- HRVS significantly impose on a person's liberty, yet SPD does not have a policy that governs such tactics.
- Department training curriculum lacks discussion about in which HRVS firearms should be drawn or whether there are alternate tactics that do not compromise officer safety.
- OPA previously [issued a MAR](#) on this topic in 2018 under [2017OPA-0667](#).

**Recommendation(s)**

- Create a policy under SPD Manual Title 6 governing HRVS to provide guidance on the requirements and limitations of such stops, including when it is appropriate for officers to conduct felony-level stops.
- Amplify HRVS training to provide examples of stops in which it may be unnecessary to draw firearms or where alternate tactics exist that ensure both officer and public safety.
- Expand SPD Manual 15.190-TSK to include guidelines for confirming and contacting possible occupied stolen vehicles.

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

Sincerely,

*AM*



**Seattle** Office of  
Police Accountability

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Andrew Myerberg  
Director, Office of Police Accountability