



March 24, 2026

Chief Shon F. Barnes
Seattle Police Department
PO Box 34986
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Chief Barnes:

Please see the Management Action Recommendation below.

Case Number

- 2023OPA-0273 / 2026COMP-0001

Topic

- Mandatory Reporting

Summary

- It was alleged the Named Employee violated Washington's mandatory reporting law by not reporting alleged sexual abuse of their minor child by an older sibling.

Analysis

- OPA's investigation found the Named Employee was aware of Washington's mandatory reporting law, even if he was uncertain of his specific obligations. Ultimately, the Named Employee was aware the alleged abuse was reported to a different mandatory reporter at an indeterminate time. The Named Employee did not report the alleged abuse to either the appropriate law enforcement agency or Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The alleged abuse went unreported for about eight months.
- Washington State Law specifies law enforcement officers are mandatory reporters when they have reasonable cause to believe a child has suffered abuse or neglect. The law requires officers either report the incident, or cause a report to be made, to the proper law enforcement agency or DCYF within 48 hours.¹
- [SPD Policy 15.220 - Child Welfare](#) outlines SPD employee obligations in child welfare cases but does not explicitly state that law enforcement officers are mandatory reporters. Nor does the policy provide the required standards, timeline, or procedure for making a mandatory report.
- OPA found evidence that the requirements of the mandatory reporter law were covered when the Named Employee was trained at the Basic Law Enforcement Academy.



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- OPA reviewed comparable policies from other large, Washington State police departments:
 - Spokane requires department members to notify DCYF per RCW 26.44.030, and does not specify the status of the officer or how they acquired knowledge of the abuse.² Spokane also provides a specific notification procedure for such notifications.³
 - Bellevue policy includes a general reporting requirement around any violation of law⁴ and states officers have a responsibility to be familiar with all applicable laws.⁵
 - Everett states “Officers must report to child Protective Services (CPS) any instances in which the officer has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.”⁶ Everett also provides criteria for reporting abuse or neglect.⁷

Recommendations

- SPD should revise SPD Policy 15.220 to explicitly state that law enforcement officers are mandatory reporters under RCW 26.44.030, regardless of the circumstances in which the law enforcement officer developed reasonable cause to believe there was abuse or neglect. The policy should specify the required manner and timeline for mandatory reporting.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bonnie J. Glenn".

Bonnie J. Glenn
Director, Office of Police Accountability

Footnote 1: [RCW 26.44.030](#).

Footnote 2: Spokane Police Department. [Spokane Police Department Policy Manual](#). Policy 330.3 Child Abuse: Mandatory Notification. Effective: 02/23/2024.

Footnote 3: *Id.* at Policy 330.3.1 Notification Procedure.

Footnote 4: Bellevue Police Department. [Bellevue Police Department Policy Manual](#). Policy 11.00.420—Reporting of Violations of Laws.



Footnote 5: Bellevue Police Department. [Bellevue Police Department Policy Manual](#). Policy 11.00.250--Knowledge of Laws and Regulations.

Footnote 6: Everett Police Department. [Policy Manual](#). Policy 13.3—Mandatory Reporting and Protective Custody. Revised October 8, 2025.

Footnote 7: *Id.* (referencing Everett Police Department Procedure 3.13).