

C26-028

OMBUDS CLOSING REPORT

**POLICY AND PROCEDURES REPORT
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



**OFFICE OF THE
POLICE OMBUDS**
INDEPENDENT CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT

This report was authored by George Perezvelez, Deputy Police Ombuds, and co-authored by Bart Logue, Police Ombuds. The Office of the Police Ombuds (OPO) presented this report to the Office of the Police Ombuds Commission on Sept 15, 2026.

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Executive Summary

This report reviews an incident in which Spokane Police Department (SPD) officers responded to a report involving a 12-year-old runaway juvenile whose guardian expressed concerns about his behavioral health and requested that he be transported for involuntary treatment. During the response, officers took the juvenile into temporary custody, used physical restraint and handcuffs, evaluated the legal authority available for continued custody and possible behavioral health intervention, and interacted with armed private security personnel assisting the juvenile's guardian.

The OPO does not evaluate whether individual officers acted properly or complied with policy. Instead, this report identifies three areas for policy or training consideration: guidance concerning restraints during temporary juvenile custody; guidance concerning armed private security personnel during active law enforcement operations; and the legal framework and supervisory documentation associated with juvenile behavioral health and disposition decisions.

The OPO recommends that SPD: (1) update Policy 324, Temporary Custody of Juveniles, to provide clearer guidance on physical force, positioning, restraints, and handcuffing during temporary juvenile custody; (2) develop policy or training addressing the involvement of armed private security personnel during active law enforcement operations, with emphasis on verification of identity and authority, scene control, and officer safety; and (3) provide periodic training on the legal authorities governing juvenile behavioral health interventions and clarify supplemental reporting requirements for supervisors who materially participate in significant juvenile custody or disposition decisions.

Staff Information

Bart Logue, *Police Ombuds*

Bart Logue began serving in this capacity in September 2016, after serving as the Interim Police Ombuds. Bart also serves as a Commissioner on the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission and as a Board Member for the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE). Bart is a Certified Practitioner of Oversight (CPO) through NACOLE. Bart has a Master of Forensic Sciences from National University and a Master of National Security Affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School. Bart is a graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy, Session 239, and is also a certified Advanced Force Science Specialist.

George Perezvelez, *Deputy Police Ombuds*

George Perezvelez began serving as Deputy Police Ombuds for the City of Spokane in 2026. He has more than 18 years of experience in civilian oversight, law enforcement accountability, and policy development. He previously served as a Police Commissioner in Berkeley, California and continues his service as a Civilian Review Board member for the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Police Department. He currently serves as Vice President of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE). George is a NACOLE Certified Practitioner of Oversight (CPO) and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Clark University.

Christina Coty, *Administrative Specialist*

Christina began working at the City of Spokane in 2015 for the ITSD department in contract procurement and joined the Office of the Police Ombuds in 2018. Christina is a Certified Practitioner of Oversight through NACOLE. Prior to her work in the City of Spokane, she worked for Sony Electronics as a Regional Sales Manager managing the retail store operations in Southern California.

Tim Szambelan, *OPO Attorney*

Tim works in the Civil Division of the City Attorney's Office and currently represents the Office of the Police Ombuds and other departments within the City of Spokane. Tim is licensed to practice law in Washington and Arizona.

Attestation

This document was reviewed by the City Attorney's Office as to form prior to publishing and also reviewed by the Spokane Police Guild pursuant to the requirements provided in Article 27 of the Agreement between the City of Spokane and the Spokane Police Guild (2023-2026).

The Office of the Police Ombuds reviewed the materials available in this matter, including SPD reports, Internal Affairs documents, CAD records, complaint materials, Body Worn Camera (BWC) footage, and relevant policy and best practice materials. The OPO's review was conducted for the purpose of assessing the complaint investigation, identifying policy and practice issues, and making recommendations for systemic improvement.

The OPO's review is limited by the materials available at the time of drafting. This report does not purport to include every fact contained in every record reviewed. Rather, it summarizes the facts and issues most relevant to the OPO's review, analysis, and recommendations.

Mission, Authority, and Purpose

The Office of the Police Ombuds exists to promote public confidence in the professionalism and accountability of the members of the Spokane Police Department (SPD) by providing independent review of police actions, thoughtful policy recommendations, and ongoing community outreach.

The OPO does so by providing independent and thorough oversight of matters that affect the community and the department. We seek to help bridge the gap between the community and SPD by publishing closing reports on matters of public concern. These reports increase accountability and transparency and may lead to recommendations for improving police policies or practices. Our goal is to reduce the likelihood of similar concerns arising in the future. We also seek to highlight effective police practices and help the community understand why those practices were used, subject to the limitations contained in the 2023-2026 Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) §04.32.030 and the CBA provide authority for the OPO to publish closing reports on a case once it has been certified by the Police Ombuds or Deputy Police Ombuds and the Chief of Police has made a final determination in the matter. The OPO can also publish policy and procedure reports regarding cases the OPO reviews during a review board process. The OPO's recommendations will not concern discipline in specific cases or officers and shall not be used in disciplinary proceedings of bargaining unit employees. Reports are solely meant to further discussion on aspects of incidents that may be improved upon.

Reports also provide opportunities for policy and procedure recommendations that can result in improved police performance through their eventual implementation. Writing a report allows the OPO to provide a more thorough review of what occurred in an incident to offer recommendations for improving the quality of police investigations and practices, including the Internal Affairs (IA) investigative process, policies, and training or any other related matter.

The OPO may also recommend mediation to the Chief of Police at any time prior to certifying a case. Should all parties agree and the officer(s) participate in good faith, the OPO may publish a report following mediation including any agreements reached between parties. Mediations are governed by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 7.07.070 and are considered confidential. The content of the mediation may not be used by the City or any other party in any criminal or disciplinary process.

Required Disclosures

Under Article 27 of the current CBA between the City of Spokane and the Spokane Police Guild, this report must provide the following disclosures:

1. Any closing report from an IA investigation shall clearly state the information expressed within the report is the perspective of the OPO, that the OPO does not speak for the City on the matter, and the report is not an official determination of what occurred;
2. The report will include the current policy practice, policy, and/or training as applicable and shall expressly state the policy recommendations that follow reflects the OPO's opinion on modifications that may assist the department in reducing the likelihood of harm in the future; they do not reflect an opinion on individual job performance under the current policy, practice, or training;
3. A report shall not comment on discipline of an officer(s). This prohibition includes a prohibition on writing in a report whether the OPO or OPOC agrees with or differs from the Chief's findings, whether the officer acted properly, whether the officer's actions were acceptable, or whether the officer's actions were in compliance with training or policy. Additionally, no report will criticize an officer or witness or include a statement on the OPO or OPOC's opinion on the veracity or credibility of an officer or witness.
4. OPO's closing report shall not be used by the City as a basis to open or re-open complaints against any bargaining unit employees, or to reconsider any decision(s) previously made concerning discipline.
5. The report may not be used in disciplinary proceedings or other tangible adverse employment actions against bargaining unit employees, but not limited to decisions regarding defense and indemnification of an officer; and
6. The names of officers or witnesses may not be disclosed.¹

Additional information and records regarding this matter are available through the City Clerk's Office by [Public Records Requests](#).

¹ In addition to not mentioning officer or witness names, we chose to use the same standard for other involved persons.

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Procedural History

This incident occurred on March 22, 2026. Spokane Police Department (SPD) officers responded to the area of 222 N. Wall St. in downtown Spokane in reference to a runaway juvenile whose guardian described him as vulnerable and possibly in need of an involuntary behavioral health intervention. Officer A had dealt with the juvenile runaway in the past and was familiar with him. During the encounter, officers used a takedown, physical restraint and handcuffs while taking the juvenile into temporary custody. The incident also involved repeated interactions with armed private security personnel that raised operational concerns as well as some initial confusion with EMS personnel.

A complaint regarding the incident was filed on March 23, 2026, and assigned to an Internal Affairs investigator on April 4, 2026. The allegations investigated were Demeanor,² Excessive Force,³ and Inadequate Response.⁴ The OPO certified the complaint as completed through a timely, thorough, and objective process on June 10, 2026. The case was closed on June 18, 2026. The Complainant was informed of the final disposition by the Spokane Police Department on June 29, 2026, via an official letter.

The OPO's summary of facts is based upon a careful review of the complaint materials, officer reports, and a review of the available BWC footage. This closing report addresses policy, training, and practice issues identified through the complaint review.⁵

OPO Summary of Facts

Incident

On March 22, 2026, at approximately 4:58 p.m., Spokane Police were dispatched to the area of 222 N. Wall St. in downtown Spokane to assist in locating a vulnerable juvenile whose guardian had reported him as a runaway. The Complainant informed dispatch that the juvenile had been seen downtown earlier in the area around North Wall Street and West Spokane Falls Boulevard by the Riverfront Skate & Wheels Park.⁶

Dispatch provided officers with a description of the juvenile, including that he was wearing a grey hoodie with white writing, a grey hat, and a green backpack. Dispatch also relayed that the juvenile had reportedly been found intoxicated at a residence the previous day and returned

² Policy 340.3.2 (k), Discourteous or disrespectful treatment of members of the public or this department.

³ Policy 301.1, Use of Force.

⁴ Policy 340.3.5 (q), Failure to take reasonable action while on duty and when required by law.

⁵ Under the agreements between the City, the Police Guild, and the Lieutenants and Captains Association in the current CBAs, the OPO is prohibited from stating whether the officer(s) acted properly, whether an officer's actions were acceptable, or whether an officer's actions were in compliance with training or policy. As such, this report does not state the substance of the final determination made by the chain of command.

⁶ CAD View for 2026-20052471, at 2 (uploaded to IAPro on March 25, 2026).

home by law enforcement. When they arrived and opened the vehicle door, the juvenile fled. The Complainant believed that he went back to the house in the valley.

While SPD was responding, dispatch continued to update the officers. At one point, dispatch advised that private security personnel were with the juvenile near 222 N. Wall St. and had confirmed his location in the park. Dispatch further updated that he was running southbound on Howard with 5 other teenagers. He was then seen by the stairs near the Parkade prior to sprinting east, where he was contacted by SPD.⁷

Upon contact, the juvenile was taken to the ground and placed in handcuffs while officers waited for the Complainant to arrive.⁸ Security personnel were also in the vicinity. Responding officers and supervisors began assessing whether there was legal authority for an involuntary behavioral health detention, as requested by the Complainant. The Complainant also requested EMS while officers continued evaluating the available behavioral health options. SPD also had several interactions with private security personnel. Officers ultimately determined that they did not have a basis to continue detaining the juvenile for involuntary behavioral health intervention and released him from police custody. The juvenile ultimately ran away again.

Officer A

Officer A reported that he parked his patrol car and walked around the corner to see if he could find the juvenile. When Officer A went around the corner, he observed the juvenile running back towards him with a white male chasing after him. Officer A instructed the juvenile to “stop”⁹ and was able to grab the juvenile by the backpack and effected a takedown, putting him on the ground.¹⁰ Officer A reported that, while he was attempting to detain the juvenile, the man who had been chasing him attempted to assist with the restraint. Officer A stated that he pushed the male off. “I got him, stop, get off, who are you?” The man responded, “Security from...”¹¹ and Officer A responded, “so stop.”¹² The male then told Officer A that he was security for the juvenile’s family.¹³

Officer A then placed the juvenile in handcuffs. The juvenile squirmed and attempted to kick Officer B. Later, when it appeared that the juvenile was preparing to spit at Officer B, Officer A placed the juvenile’s head against the concrete and stated, “Are you going to chill out? I don’t want to put your face on the concrete, are you going to try to spit? I wanna be cool with you. Remember me from last time?”¹⁴

⁷ CAD View for 2026-20052471, at 2-3 (uploaded to IAPro on March 25, 2026).

⁸ Officer A’s BWC at 01:10.

⁹ *Id.* at 00:59.

¹⁰ *Id.* at 01:10.

¹¹ We have intentionally not named the security company in the same manner as we do not name individual names.

¹² *Id.* at 01:10.

¹³ Officer A’s Field Case Report, case 2026-20052471 at 2 (March 22, 2026). Officer A’s BWC at 02:30.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 03:21.

Officer A reported that he asked the security personnel, who stated they were working for the family, what they intended to do with the juvenile.¹⁵ The security personnel stated that their goal was to have the juvenile transported for involuntary behavioral health treatment at the Complainant's request and that they were "working for the family." Officer A stated that the Complainant was insisting that the juvenile be taken to hospital for an ITA and that she was afraid that he would hurt her as she had just got out of surgery.¹⁶

Officer A advised the Complainant that he did not believe the information available at that time established a basis for involuntary detention and asked the juvenile whether he was currently thinking about harming himself or others.¹⁷ The juvenile responded that he was not thinking of harming himself or others. Based on the information available to him, Officer A informed the Complainant that he did not believe officers had legal authority to involuntarily detain the juvenile. However, the Complainant was adamant that the juvenile needed to go to the hospital. Officer A informed the Complainant that she could choose to call for an ambulance and have him transported to the hospital but that they did not have the lawful authority to do so.

Officer A reported that he inquired whether the Complainant had called the juvenile's probation officer, but the Complainant responded that she tried and was not able to get hold of them. Officer A also inquired about the possibility that the juvenile could go to his dad's house, but the Complainant advised Officer A that it was not a possibility due to behavior and former altercations with residents. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to contact behavioral health resources. The Complainant shared their number with Supervisor A.¹⁸

Officer A stated in his report that he was talking to the juvenile with Supervisor A when a member of the private security team walked directly toward the juvenile carrying handcuffs and told Officer A and Supervisor A that he intended to take custody of the juvenile.¹⁹ Supervisor A responded, "Who the fuck are you? Hold on...", and extended his arm to prevent the security employee from moving closer. Officer A told the security employee that he did not have authority to take custody of the juvenile while the juvenile remained in SPD custody.²⁰ The security employee continued to argue that, because police were not going to charge the juvenile, he would leave with the parent. Officer A directed him to back away while officers determined the next steps. Supervisor A told him, "Go over there and be a citizen," and the security employee responded, "All right."

Officer A reported that, once the juvenile had calmed down and agreed to go with the Complainant, he determined there was no longer legal authority to keep the juvenile in handcuffs and removed them. He then walked the juvenile over to the Complainant as medics arrived on

¹⁵ Officer A's Field Case Report, case 2026-20052471 at 2 (March 22, 2026).

¹⁶ Supervisor A BWC at 16:40.

¹⁷ Officer A's BWC at 05:00.

¹⁸ Supervisor A BWC at 11:23.

¹⁹ Id. at 21:32

²⁰ Officer A's BWC at 22:01.

scene. Officer A further stated that the juvenile was adamant about not going to the hospital and the Complainant refused to take him home. Officer A reported that the juvenile began to walk towards him again, asking him to take him to jail. As the juvenile was trying to walk towards him, the Complainant put her arm across his chest to stop him. At that point, the juvenile pushed the Complainant's arm out of the way and continued to walk past her. Officer A reported that it was then that the juvenile ran away again. The Complainant began to claim that the juvenile had hit her in the face.²¹

Officer A reported that he observed the interaction and believed the BWC footage did not show the juvenile striking the Complainant in the face. Unsatisfied with the interactions and the result of her request, the Complainant asked for a higher-ranking supervisor.²²

Officer B

Officer B's report was generally consistent with Officer A's account. Officer B reported observing three adult males near the officers on scene. The men identified themselves as security guards working for the family, which was later consistent with information provided by the Complainant. Officer B stated that he did not observe identification indicating who employed the men, although they displayed badges and firearms on their waists.

Supervisor A

Supervisor A stated in his report that he had phone contact with the Complainant prior to contacting the juvenile, but he did not record the phone conversation. Supervisor A reported that, during the phone conversation, the Complainant provided a brief account of the situation, including that the juvenile had run away the previous day in Spokane Valley. The Complainant advised Supervisor A that the Spokane County Sheriff's Office had returned the juvenile, but he had immediately run away again. The Complainant told Supervisor A that she had posted about the juvenile being missing on social media to gather more information about his whereabouts.²³

The Complainant told Supervisor A that she was concerned because the juvenile was reportedly not taking his prescribed medication. Supervisor A stated he advised the Complainant that if officers contacted the juvenile, they would see if there were circumstances that would support an ITA. Supervisor A stated in his report that, at the time of the incident, he believed state law did not permit an ITA for a child under 16. The juvenile was 12 years old.²⁴

Supervisor A stated that the Complainant called him back a couple minutes later advising him that a Private Security Company was out with the juvenile across from the water fountain at Riverfront Park. Supervisor A stated that he 'incorrectly assumed' the Private Security Company was an

²¹ *Id.* at 32:10.

²² Supervisor A's BWC at 13:27.

²³ Supervisor A's Field Case Report, case 2026-20052471 at 2 (March 22, 2026).

²⁴ *Id.*

unrelated entity that may have learned of the missing juvenile through the Complainant's social media post.²⁵

Supervisor A reported that when he arrived on scene, he observed two or three adult males standing around the officers who were detaining the juvenile in handcuffs. Supervisor A reported that at least two of the men remained near the officers and identified themselves as employees of a Private Security Company. Their role was initially unclear, and they were visibly armed. One of the men identified himself as the owner of the company. Supervisor A reported that the owner was very vague and "cryptic" about how they became involved in calling themselves private security for the Complainant's family.²⁶

Supervisor A reported that the security employee explained that the company provided armed security for a local business and had agreed to assist the Complainant in locating the juvenile without charge because she was a customer. The individual stated that he had prior military experience and that his partner had previously worked for HSI.²⁷

Supervisor A explained in his report that officers spent a lot of time trying to figure out the best course of action for the juvenile. Supervisor A reported that officers determined they did not have a basis to involuntarily detain the juvenile under the circumstances presented and did not have probable cause to arrest him for a criminal offense. Supervisor A stated that, at one point, the owner of the security company approached him and Officer A while they were standing with the juvenile. Supervisor A reported that, as the security employee approached, his badge and firearm were clearly visible on his hip. Supervisor A stated that the security employee was carrying handcuffs and announced that he intended to take custody of the juvenile on the family's behalf.²⁸

Supervisor A wrote the following in his report: "I was extremely concerned by this unknown and armed person trying to bypass three obviously uniformed officers to take a 12-year-old detained child from our custody. I did not allow him to, and Officer A directed him back to the sidewalk."²⁹ Supervisor A directed the security employee away from the officers, stating, "go be a citizen."³⁰ The security guard can be seen putting the handcuffs back into his belt and moving away.³¹

Supervisor A reported that officers decided to remove the handcuffs after the juvenile had "somewhat" agreed to go voluntarily for behavioral health services. Supervisor A reported that another security employee attempted to persuade the juvenile to go with him and believed the juvenile did not want to accompany the security personnel because they were armed.³²

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ Supervisor A's Field Case Report, case 2026-20052471 at 3 (March 22, 2026).

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ Supervisor A's BWC at 17:28.

³¹ *Id.* at 17:35.

³² Supervisor A's Field Case Report, case 2026-20052471 at 3 (March 22, 2026).

Supervisor A stated that the juvenile began walking back to him telling him he wanted to go to jail. As he started to walk towards them, the Complainant was trying to hold him back and the juvenile pulled the Complainant's grip off him and pushed it away. Supervisor A stated that, if the juvenile's hand made contact with the Complainant's face, he believed the contact was incidental to the juvenile attempting to get away rather than an intentional assault.³³

Supervisor A reported that the juvenile then fled on foot and that Officer A grabbed him for 'just a second' before releasing him because Supervisor A believed officers no longer had legal authority to continue the detention.³⁴ After the juvenile broke free, the Complainant immediately complained that he had struck her in the face and she wanted to press charges. Supervisor A reported that four officers were present and that none believed they had observed an assault. The Complainant expressed her displeasure and wanted to talk to a higher-ranking supervisor. Supervisor A stated that he called Supervisor C, who responded and attempted to explain the limitations on law enforcement authority, but the Complainant was still not satisfied.³⁵

Supervisor B

As Supervisor B did not prepare a supplemental report, the narrative and interactions summarized here are taken from BWC footage.

During the encounter, Supervisor B discussed with Supervisor A and Officer A the legal and practical options available for the juvenile. When Supervisor A asked, "What can we do?" Supervisor B explored whether the juvenile was intoxicated or presented a danger to himself or others and discussed possible disposition options.³⁶

The discussion continued as officers attempted to determine whether there was a lawful basis for continued detention and what alternatives remained available. Officer A stated that he did not smell alcohol on the juvenile and believed he was behaving normally. Later, Supervisor B discussed possible options, including voluntary transport, contacting the juvenile's probation officer, and attempting to reach behavioral health resources. Supervisor B ultimately stated, "As far as our governmental interest as law enforcement, I think we are done here."³⁷

When officers discussed whether another basis for detention existed, including possible obstruction, Officer A stated that he had not given the juvenile a command before taking him to the ground. Supervisor B responded, "No crime, no ITA criteria."³⁸

The Complainant continued to express concern that the juvenile might harm himself or someone else and stated, "You are not going to fucking release him, because he is going to go kill himself,

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ Supervisor B's BWC at 4:47-5:34.

³⁷ *Id.* at 7:54, 10:49.

³⁸ *Id.* at 10:31.

or kill somebody else, and it will be on your fucking heads...do you hear me?" Supervisor B responded by asking how much additional time was needed to contact available resources, while also noting that officers could not hold the juvenile indefinitely.³⁹

During that discussion, a private security employee interjected and began offering views about what could be done with the juvenile. Supervisor B asked, "Who are you again? How are you involved?" and then directed the individual to step away from the officers. The security employee moved only a short distance away.⁴⁰ Supervisor B later expressed concern about whether the juvenile could lawfully remain in handcuffs and noted that one of the security employees had stated that he intended to handcuff the juvenile.⁴¹

As officers prepared to end the detention, Supervisor A stated that the security personnel were "going to be a problem," while Supervisor B responded that the matter would ultimately be the Complainant's responsibility once police released the juvenile. The Complainant stated that she intended to take custody of him and return home. Supervisor A explained that officers were attempting to release the juvenile in a manner that would avoid renewed flight or confrontation with the security personnel. Supervisor B then directed Officer A to remove the handcuffs, stating, "We are done with him." The juvenile subsequently ran from the scene.⁴²

Juvenile Statements

When Officer A asked whether he was thinking about suicide or harming himself or others, the juvenile responded, "No."⁴³ During the encounter, the juvenile repeatedly asked why he was being detained, whether officers would chase him if he ran, and why the private security personnel were armed. He also told officers that he did not want to go to the hospital and asked whether running from the private security personnel would constitute a crime. Officer A explained that the security personnel did not have law enforcement authority and distinguished between simply running away and physically fighting with them.⁴⁴

Supervisor C

As Supervisor C did not prepare a supplemental report, the narrative and interactions summarized here are taken from BWC footage. Supervisor C responded after the Complainant requested a higher-ranking supervisor. During their discussion, the Complainant explained that she wanted assistance transporting the juvenile for behavioral health treatment. Supervisor C

³⁹ *Id.* at 12:25.

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 12:35-12:47.

⁴¹ *Id.* at 18:14-18:19.

⁴² *Id.* at 21:09-23:21, 32:18.

⁴³ Officer A's BWC at 05:00.

⁴⁴ Supervisor B's BWC at 20:38, 23:30-24:56.

explained the limitations he believed applied to police authority and advised that an ambulance could be requested by the complainant as a possible voluntary option.⁴⁵

Supervisor C told the Complainant that officers could take enforcement action for criminal conduct and, under certain circumstances, could detain a person for involuntary treatment. He further stated that he believed officers did not have lawful authority to involuntarily detain the 12-year-old juvenile under the circumstances presented. The Complainant continued to describe concerns that the juvenile was a danger to himself and reported that he had previously said he was going to kill himself. Supervisor C asked whether the juvenile had identified a plan or explained how he intended to harm himself and, shortly thereafter, reiterated his belief that the juvenile was not subject to involuntary detention.⁴⁶

The Complainant also asked whether officers could physically assist her in taking the juvenile to the hospital. Supervisor C explained that he did not believe officers had lawful authority to use force for that purpose. The Complainant disagreed and advised that officers had assisted with similar situations involving the juvenile in the past. Supervisor C responded that those prior actions may have been based on an incorrect understanding of the law and reiterated his view that officers could not use force to involuntarily detain the juvenile under the circumstances presented.⁴⁷

The Complainant also continued to raise the reported assault, explaining that the juvenile had struck her. Supervisor C explained that, based on the information available to him, he believed the juvenile's movement was an effort to get away rather than an intentional act to harm the Complainant and therefore did not provide a basis for criminal enforcement.⁴⁸

Supervisor C acknowledged the Complainant's concern for the juvenile's safety and expressed frustration with what he understood to be the limitations of Washington law. He stated, "I wish I could help but I cannot put my officers or my supervisors at risk of jail or losing their jobs without that lawful authority." He later told the Complainant, "Then the state of Washington is to blame for not letting us take care of him."⁴⁹

Security Company Report

The Private Security Company submitted a report signed by three of its personnel. The report is organized into several sections addressing the company's involvement, qualifications, interactions with law enforcement, custody decisions, and its interpretation of the events. The summary below focuses only on the portions most relevant to this review.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Supervisor C's BWC at 04:45-06:03.

⁴⁶ *Id.* at 06:36-08:46.

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 08:50-12:23.

⁴⁸ *Id.* at 07:44-07:56.

⁴⁹ *Id.* at 09:30, 12:51.

⁵⁰ [Private Security Company] – Incident Report (uploaded to IAPro on March 25, 2026).

The report states that the company became involved on March 22, 2026, on a voluntary and unpaid basis after being contacted by the Complainant. According to the report, the Complainant provided information about the juvenile's recent behavior and her concerns regarding his whereabouts. The company described its personnel as dressed in a professional, low-profile security manner and stated that they located and monitored the juvenile before SPD arrived.⁵¹

The company reported that, after SPD arrived, the juvenile fled from security personnel and was subsequently contacted by officers. One security employee stated that he identified himself to the juvenile as security and displayed a badge secured to his belt. The report also addressed an allegation that a security employee had displayed or "flashed" a firearm and disputed that allegation.⁵²

The report further states that, while officers were dealing with the juvenile, security personnel attempted to assist with crowd control by maintaining an outer perimeter around the immediate police activity. The company described that effort as being accomplished through verbal communication and presence and stated that the perimeter was acknowledged by a supervising officer. The report also states that one security employee approached Officer A while the juvenile was resisting and offered assistance with controlling him. According to the company's account, the employee stepped back after Officer A directed him to do so.⁵³

The company also reported that its personnel attempted to provide officers with information about the juvenile's history and believed that information supported involuntary behavioral health intervention. The report characterized some officer responses as dismissive and stated that officers focused heavily on determining the identity and authority of the security personnel.⁵⁴

Regarding the later custody discussion, the report states that a security employee approached officers and advised that the company intended to take custody of the juvenile on behalf of the Complainant after SPD released him. The company characterized this statement as notice of its intended action following release, rather than an attempt to assert authority over a person who remained in police custody.⁵⁵

The report also addressed Supervisor C's later interaction with the Complainant. According to the company, Supervisor C attempted to explain the officers' actions and the limitations on police authority but had not personally witnessed the earlier portions of the incident. The company characterized Supervisor C's response as dismissive of the Complainant's concerns.⁵⁶

⁵¹ *Id.* at 1-3.

⁵² *Id.* at 4.

⁵³ *Id.* at 5.

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 6.

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 7.

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 9.

The OPO includes the Private Security Company's account because it provides a materially different perspective on several of the interactions described by SPD personnel, particularly the company's asserted role in crowd management, its attempted assistance during the initial restraint, and its statement regarding future custody of the juvenile. Those differences are relevant to the policy discussion that follows concerning how officers identify and manage the role of armed private security personnel during an active law enforcement operation.

Policy Recommendations

Applicable Policy and Current Practice⁵⁷

At the time of this incident, SPD Policy 324, Temporary Custody of Juveniles, governed circumstances in which officers may take juveniles into temporary custody. The policy addresses temporary custody and disposition of juveniles but provides limited guidance concerning the use and continued use of physical restraints during non-criminal juvenile custody.

SPD Policy 344, Report Preparation, establishes the Department's general reporting and documentation requirements. The policy requires written reports for, among other circumstances, incidents involving potential crimes against children or concerns for a child's safety, all protective custody detentions, and circumstances an employee believes should be documented or a supervisor directs to be documented. The policy also requires officers and supervisors to act promptly and efficiently in the preparation and processing of reports. However, the OPO did not identify a specific requirement that each supervisor who materially participates in a significant juvenile custody, behavioral health, or disposition decision prepare a supplemental report.

The OPO also did not identify a specific SPD policy addressing the role of armed private security personnel who enter the immediate operational area of an active law enforcement detention or seek to participate in the physical restraint or custody of a person. Existing law and general officer authority provide mechanisms for maintaining scene control and addressing interference, but the absence of more specific departmental guidance is relevant to the circumstances reviewed in this report.

Washington law separately provides the statutory framework applicable to the issues discussed below, including RCW 43.185C.260 governing temporary custody of runaway juveniles, chapter 71.34 RCW governing behavioral health treatment of minors, chapter 18.170 RCW governing private security guards, and RCW 9A.76.020 addressing obstruction of law enforcement officers.

The OPO identified three areas where additional policy guidance or training may improve future responses involving juveniles: temporary custody and restraints, interactions with armed private security personnel during active law enforcement operations, and juvenile behavioral health

⁵⁷ Due to the length of these SPD policies, they are not attached to this report. For this report, we utilized the Spokane Police Department Policy Manual issued Jan 28, 2026, which was in place at the time of the incident. The current SPD policy manual is available at <https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/police/accountability/police-policy-manual-2025-06-02.pdf>.

decision-making and supervisory documentation. The following recommendations are intended to provide officers and supervisors with clearer guidance while preserving the discretion necessary to respond to changing circumstances in the field.

Juvenile Temporary Custody and Restraints

Washington law authorizes law enforcement officers to take a runaway juvenile into temporary custody under certain circumstances and identifies the appropriate options for placement following that custody.⁵⁸ The statute establishes the authority for protective custody but provides little operational guidance concerning when physical restraints should be used while that custody is maintained.

Washington's Use of Force framework provides additional guidance. RCW 10.120.020 requires officers to exercise reasonable care when determining whether and to what extent physical force should be used, including consideration of the characteristics and conditions of the person involved.⁵⁹ The Washington Attorney General's Model Use of Force Policy similarly identifies age and other individual characteristics among the circumstances officers should consider when determining appropriate tactics.⁶⁰ These considerations take on additional significance when the person being restrained is a juvenile who is being held for protective rather than criminal purposes.

This incident demonstrates why more specific guidance may be useful. The juvenile was 12 years old and initially ran from responding officers. After Officer A took the juvenile to the ground, the juvenile resisted, attempted to kick, and later appeared to attempt to spit at Officer B. Officer A placed the juvenile in handcuffs, placed his head briefly on the ground, and subsequently moved him away from the surrounding group while officers attempted to determine an appropriate disposition. As the encounter continued, officers determined that there was no crime to investigate and no basis to continue holding the juvenile for an involuntary behavioral health detention. The officers nevertheless remained concerned that the juvenile would run if the handcuffs were removed while they worked through available options with the Complainant.

Those changing circumstances are important. The initial justification for restraining a juvenile may differ from the justification for continuing the restraint after the immediate resistance or safety concern has diminished. Officers may also have legitimate concerns regarding flight, renewed resistance, self-harm, or the safety of others. Policy should provide sufficient guidance to help officers reassess the continued necessity of restraints as those circumstances evolve.

⁵⁸ RCW 43.185C.260, *Custody of child by law enforcement officer*, available at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=43.185C.260>

⁵⁹ RCW 10.120.020, *Permissible uses of force*, available at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=10.120.020>

⁶⁰ See Washington AGO, Model Use of Force Policy PDF, p. 6. https://agportal-s3bucket.s3.amazonaws.com/uploadedfiles/Another/UOF%20Model%20Policies_070122_FINAL_0.pdf.

SPD Policy 324, Temporary Custody of Juveniles, addresses when juveniles may be taken into temporary custody but provides limited guidance concerning the use of physical restraints during those encounters. More specific direction could assist officers in considering the juvenile's age and behavior, the reason for custody, the nature of any safety or flight concern, the duration and positioning of the restraint, and whether less restrictive alternatives are reasonably available. The policy should preserve officers' ability to respond to legitimate safety concerns while recognizing that temporary protective custody of a juvenile presents considerations different from a criminal arrest.

Recommendation 26-31: SPD should update Policy 324, Temporary Custody of Juveniles, to provide clearer guidance on the use of physical force, positioning, restraints, and handcuffing during temporary juvenile custody, including appropriate supervisory review.

Interactions with Armed Private Security Personnel

Private security personnel may possess information that is useful to responding officers. Their role, however, is distinct from that of sworn law enforcement. That distinction becomes particularly important when armed private security personnel enter the immediate area of an active police detention or attempt to participate in the physical control or custody of another person.

Those concerns arose early in this incident. When Officer A encountered the juvenile, the juvenile was running toward the officer while being chased by members of a Private Security Company. After Officer A took the juvenile to the ground, a security employee attempted to assist in restraining him. Officer A pushed the individual away, asked who he was, and directed him to stop touching the juvenile.⁶¹ Officer A later expressed uncertainty about who the security personnel were, noting that they were armed, claimed to work for the family, and had been chasing a 12-year-old.⁶²

The uncertainty continued as additional officers and supervisors arrived. Officer B reported observing three adult males near the officers who identified themselves as security guards working for the family. Although the men displayed badges and firearms, Officer B did not observe identification establishing who employed them.⁶³ Supervisor A similarly reported uncertainty concerning how the Private Security Company became involved and described the explanation provided by the company's owner as vague.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Officer A's Field Case Report, case 2026-20052471, at 2 (March 22, 2026); Officer A's BWC at 01:10.

⁶² Officer A's BWC at 06:18.

⁶³ Officer B's Supplemental Report, case 2026-20052471, at 2 (March 22, 2026).

⁶⁴ Supervisor A's Field Case Report, case 2026-20052471, at 2 (March 22, 2026).

The interaction escalated when one security employee approached officers while visibly armed and carrying handcuffs and announced that he intended to take custody of the juvenile on behalf of the family. Supervisor A described being “extremely concerned” by an unknown armed person attempting to move past uniformed officers to take custody of a 12-year-old who remained detained by SPD. Officers directed the security employee away from the immediate area.⁶⁵

The Private Security Company viewed its role differently. Its report states that its personnel were identifiable as private security, were assisting the Complainant voluntarily, and did not intend to assert authority over a person who remained in police custody. The report characterizes the statement regarding custody as notice of what the Private Security Company intended to do following SPD's release of the juvenile.⁶⁶ That perspective is relevant. It does not eliminate the operational concern facing officers who must quickly determine who an armed person is, what role or authority that person has, and whether the person's conduct is assisting or interfering with an active police response.

Other police departments address similar concerns through policies governing observation, interference, and control of the immediate area of police operations. The Portland Police Bureau permits officers to establish reasonable perimeters or distance requirements and identifies direct physical intervention, breaching an established distance, impeding emergency personnel, and conduct jeopardizing officer or third-party safety as potential interference. The Saint Paul Police Department similarly directs officers to move an individual to another location when the person's position threatens officer safety or interferes with the performance of police duties.⁶⁷ Although these policies are not specific to private security, they demonstrate that maintaining appropriate separation between outside individuals and active police operations is an established officer-safety and scene-control consideration.

Washington law also provides context for that distinction. Chapter 18.170 RCW separately regulates private security guards, including armed private security guards, while RCW 9A.76.020 prohibits a person from willfully hindering, delaying, or obstructing a law enforcement officer performing official duties.⁶⁸ These statutes do not establish that the Private Security Company personnel committed a criminal offense during this incident, but they reinforce the importance of clearly defining the respective roles of private security and law enforcement during an active police operation.

⁶⁵ *Id.* at 3; Supervisor A's BWC at 21:34.

⁶⁶ [Private Security Company] – Incident Report at 3-6 (uploaded to IAPro on March 25, 2026).

⁶⁷ Portland Police Bureau Directive 0635.20, *Community Member Observation of Police*, available at <https://www.portland.gov/policies/police-directives/field-operations-0600/063520-community-member-observation-police>; Saint Paul Police Department Manual § 400.00, *Line Procedures*, available at <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/police/saint-paul-police-manual/40000-line-procedures>.

⁶⁸ Chapter 18.170 RCW, *Security Guards*, available at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=18.170>; RCW 9A.76.020, *Obstructing a Law Enforcement Officer*, available at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=9A.76.020>.

This incident illustrates the practical distinction the policy should address. An armed private security employee who provides information or observing from a reasonable distance presents a materially different concern than one who enters the immediate area of a detention, participates in physical restraint, interjects themselves in the process, or attempts to assume custody. Clearer guidance would help officers establish those boundaries while preserving cooperation with private security when appropriate.

Recommendation 26-32: SPD should develop policy or training addressing the involvement of armed private security personnel during active law enforcement operations, with particular emphasis on verification of identity and authority, scene control, and officer safety.

Juvenile Behavioral Health Decisions and Supervisory Documentation

This incident required officers and supervisors to work through several overlapping issues involving a runaway juvenile, reported behavioral health concerns, a parent's request for involuntary treatment, and the limits of police authority. Washington maintains a separate statutory framework for behavioral health treatment of minors under chapter 71.34 RCW. Among other provisions, RCW 71.34.020 defines a “likelihood of serious harm” for a minor to include certain threats or attempts of physical harm to self or others, as well as conduct that places another person in reasonable fear of serious physical harm.⁶⁹

The information available to officers was mixed. The Complainant reported concerns about the juvenile’s mental health, including that he had previously said he was going to kill himself, and she also expressed concern that he might harm himself or someone else. The juvenile, however, denied current thoughts of harming himself or anyone else when questioned by Officer A. Officer A also reported that he did not observe signs of intoxication. Officers and supervisors continued to discuss whether an involuntary behavioral health intervention was legally available and considered other options, including contacting the juvenile's probation officer, mental health resources, and possible voluntary transport.

The incident also demonstrated uncertainty concerning the legal authority applicable to a 12-year-old. Supervisor A later documented that, during the initial response, he did not understand how the applicable involuntary treatment provisions applied to a juvenile of that age.⁷⁰ Other officers and supervisors sought clarification during the encounter while attempting to determine what authority they possessed and what options remained available. The OPO does not conclude that a particular behavioral health disposition should have occurred. The circumstances do, however, demonstrate the value of ensuring that officers and supervisors receive current training concerning the legal framework governing behavioral health intervention for minors and

⁶⁹ RCW 71.34.020, *Definitions*, available at <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=71.34.020>.

⁷⁰ Supervisor A's Field Case Report, case 2026-20052471, at 2-3 (March 22, 2026).

understand when additional behavioral health resources may be necessary, particularly when determining the appropriateness of an ITA designation.

The incident also highlights the importance of documenting significant supervisory involvement. Multiple supervisors participated in discussions concerning continued custody, behavioral health intervention, and release, but not every participating supervisor prepared a supplemental report. As a result, portions of the supervisory decision-making process had to be reconstructed from BWC during subsequent review. When a supervisor materially participates in a significant juvenile custody or disposition decision, a supplemental narrative can preserve the information considered and provide a more complete basis for later review.

Recommendation 26-33: SPD should provide periodic training on the legal authorities governing juvenile behavioral health interventions and clarify supplemental reporting requirements for supervisors who materially participate in significant juvenile custody or disposition decisions.

Summary of Recommendations

1. **Recommendation 26-31**: SPD should update Policy 324, Temporary Custody of Juveniles, to provide clearer guidance on the use of physical force, positioning, restraints, and handcuffing during temporary juvenile custody, including appropriate supervisory review.
2. **Recommendation 26-32**: SPD should develop policy or training addressing the involvement of armed private security personnel during active law enforcement operations, with particular emphasis on verification of identity and authority, scene control, and officer safety.
3. **Recommendation 26-33**: SPD should provide periodic training on the legal authorities governing juvenile behavioral health interventions and clarify supplemental reporting requirements for supervisors who materially participate in significant juvenile custody or disposition decisions.