



**OFFICE OF  
POLICE OMBUDSMAN**  
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February 7, 2018

Chief Craig Meidl  
Spokane Police Department  
1100 W. Mallon Avenue  
Spokane, Washington 99260

**RE: R18-1 – Crime scene shields**

Dear Chief Meidl,

The most recent officer involved shooting (OIS) on December 26, 2017 was and continues to be a great source of concern in the community. It has highlighted some shortcomings in the communication between the police department and the Indian American community, as well as unmet expectations.

The Indian American community and advocacy groups turned out at the last Office of the Police Ombudsman Commission monthly meeting to communicate their frustrations. First, the leaders of the Indian American community were not alerted when the subject involved in the OIS was Indian American. Second, there are no designated liaisons between Spokane Police Department (SPD) and the Indian American community. However, the primary concern raised was the duration for which the body was left exposed to public view, for multiple hours.

In public comment, a citizen referenced a similar officer involved shooting in 2003 where the subject, Eagle Michael was left exposed to the public for an extended period of time. That incident was the catalyst for discussions between the Indian American community and SPD. The Indian American community left these discussions with the impression that SPD agreed to implement a practice where every patrol officer would carry screens in his or her vehicle to shield exposed bodies of deceased subjects from the public. Within the department, I am aware that this is a topic of conversation that command staff is trying to address.

In considering the community impact in similar incidents in the future, I recommend that a solution consensus is reached as soon as possible. SPD should refresh or implement the practice of shielding the bodies of deceased subjects. At a minimum, SPD must have a policy to divert all traffic in incidents where a deceased body is in public view.

Sincerely,

Bart Logue  
Police Ombudsman  
Office of the Police Ombudsman, City of Spokane