



# SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

**CRAIG N. MEIDL**  
**CHIEF OF POLICE**

## Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C16-045 OPO Number: 16-17  
Date of Complaint: 06/21/2016  
Allegation: Inadequate Response  
Chain of Command Finding: Inquiry  
Final Discipline: Not Applicable

### INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

The complainants are members of Spokane Street Preachers and were preaching the gospel during the Spokane Pride Parade. The complainants allege a lack of police protection. There was a truck and horse trailer obstructing the complainants' view. First, complainants requested the police have the truck removed, but the request was denied. This created a blind spot that infringed on their First Amendment Rights to Free Speech. The complainants indicated they have consulted with legal counsel for violations of free speech rights. Second, a member of the group is making the complaint that they were assaulted by a woman the group identified as lesbian. Complainants allege the failure to move the horse trailer resulted in the police's failure to detect and timely respond to the incident, resulting in preachers getting assaulted. Thirdly, the event was understaffed with police and that there was only one officer in the area and he was not able to respond.

The complainants have been preaching this event and several others over the years, and this particular Pride Parade shows a reduction in police protection from previous years. At the same time, they have been experiencing a rise in hostility and violence. This is especially concerning to complainants because on the national level, there is an increase in violence and need for police protection for the public. Lastly, the complainants plan to continue preaching in years to come and want to ensure future events are more secure.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The allegations made by the complainant are not violations of policy or law. Police officers do not have the lawful authority to order a person to move their persons or legal placed property, in order to facilitate another person's desire to be seen or heard by others. The complainants First Amendment Right to Free

Speech was not hampered nor hindered in any way by the police department. Unless a request has been made, and subsequently granted, to have additional off duty officers present for a specific detail, we do not owe a special duty to a specific person or group for protection. The police department's duty is to the public as a whole. Our staffing for this year's Pride Parade was one officer higher than last year's event. This was closed as an Inquiry because there was no violation of policy.