



# SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

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

## Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C18-064 OPO Number: 18-37  
Date of Complaint: 8/4/2018  
Allegation: Inadequate Response and Demeanor  
Chain of Command Finding: Multiple  
Final Discipline: Not Applicable

### INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

Officers responded to an Argument call. The complainant had argued with his roommate at a group home. He said his roommate assaulted him and punched the TV. The complainant called the police because he wanted to press charges against his roommate. He was unhappy with police response and demeanor.

### COMPLAINT

The complainant alleged that one officer yelled at him and neither officer investigated the incident fully.

### INVESTIGATION

The Internal Affairs investigator reviewed available documentation about the case, including police reports, photographs, and body worn camera video. Interviews were conducted with the involved officers and the complainant.

The complainant had called to report he was punched in the face by his roommate. Officers responded and spoke to the complainant, roommate, and the staff of the group home. At the completion of their investigation, the officers left the scene and made notes in the call that stated it was a verbal argument only, the roommates were separated, and they did not have probable cause for an arrest. Officers were unable to identify any injuries to either male and there was a lack of independent witnesses. The claim of the malicious mischief to the broken TV was also under dispute, as the roommate alleged that the complainant pushed him into the TV, breaking it, and the complainant alleged that the roommate punched it and broke it. There were no witnesses to support either party's claim. Officers concluded that the alleged assault between the complainant and his roommate was a mutual combatants situation, so their main action was to separate the two parties. When interviewed about his demeanor, the senior officer on the call explained that he was curt with the complainant when he explained that the roommate was moving out of the room and that the complainant was to stay away from him.

The Internal Affairs investigator noted that was unclear to officers if domestic violence laws applied in this facility, where the two males are placed together temporarily but have not elected to live together. During the investigation, the Domestic Violence (DV) Unit supervisor was consulted about this case and he did not think that the situation constituted a DV.

In their review of the investigation, the chain of command noted that there appeared to be significant confusion on the applicability of the domestic violence laws in regards to facilities such as the group home and when it would prudent to fully document the incident. Reviewers recommended a finding of Training Failure. Training was needed as several officers and a supervisor were all of differing opinions.

The chain of command also noted that the senior officer was quite direct in his communication with the complainant, but his demeanor did not rise to the level of misconduct.

#### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The Inadequate Response allegation was determined to be a Training Failure for both officers, as officers were confused about their responsibilities when responding to group homes and if domestic violence laws applied. In response to the investigation, the Academy staff sent out a Training Bulletin, “Domestic Violence Response at Care Facilities” to all officers.

The Demeanor allegation was determined to be Exonerated.