



# SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

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

## Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C18-092 OPO Number: 18-47

Date of Complaint: 10/24/2018

Allegation: Traffic/Driving Violation

Chain of Command Finding: Exonerated

Final Discipline: Not Applicable

### INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

The complainant witnessed a man back into a parked vehicle at her workplace, a medical facility, and then leave. Someone let her know the man had just left the medical office where she worked. She realized the man was a police officer. She called Crime Check to make a report of hit and run. The Spokane Police Department (SPD) then called her to say the officer did not realize he had hit a car and he was on his way back to work the situation out with the citizen.

### COMPLAINT

The complainant felt the officer should have been cited for a hit and run misdemeanor and be held accountable. She felt that officers were covering for each other.

### INVESTIGATION

The investigation consisted of a review of pictures and emails and interviews with the complainant, vehicle owner, and involved officer. The officer said he first learned of the collision when a patrol lieutenant contacted him. The lieutenant saw the hit and run call with the officer's name attached as a suspect. When notified of the accident, the officer immediately responded back to the location and contacted the vehicle owner. They exchanged driver's license information, registration, and insurance cards.

The vehicle owner told Internal Affairs that the officer contacted him directly and told him he had not realized he had hit the vehicle. The officer had given him his insurance information so he could file a claim, but the damage to his taillight was minor and he had no plans to fix it. The lightbulb still functioned. The owner said he understood how the officer could "clip a super minor amount and not notice it" due to the size of trailer and boat the officer was pulling. The owner said he did not wish to pursue anything and would not be filing an insurance claim or seeking restitution from the officer.

There was not enough evidence to support a charge of Hit and Run Unattended. The damage was minor and did not meet the threshold for a Washington State Collision report. The two vehicle owners handled

the situation civilly, and the owner of the victim vehicle did not wish to pursue it further. It did not appear that the officer knew he had hit the other vehicle. He did not flee after the collision, but stayed at the location for medical procedures. He was not seen walking around the vehicle looking for damage as one would if they believed there were involved in a collision.

#### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The chain of command review stated there was sufficient evidence that the officer was unaware that he struck a vehicle. Once he was aware, he immediately addressed the situation in the manner expected by an SPD officer. There was no evidence of misconduct by the officer. The determination was Exonerated.