



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

CRAIG N. MEIDL
CHIEF OF POLICE

Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C19-037 OPO Number: N/A
Date of Complaint: 5/2/2019
Allegation: Inadequate Response
Chain of Command Finding: Administratively Suspended
Final Discipline: Additional Training

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

An officer responded to an elementary school on the report of child abuse. He investigated the child's injuries and concluded that the injuries were a result of parental discipline rather than child abuse. A short time later, the Special Victims Unit supervisor provided additional context about the case, and the officer's supervisor instructed him to complete the paperwork to authorize an emergency placement for the child. The officer completed the paperwork and a detective was assigned to the case. The detective confirmed the injuries were child abuse and that charges would be filed with the Prosecutor's Office.

COMPLAINT

An internal complaint was generated by a discussion with the Special Victims Unit and Child Protective Services about concerns regarding the officer's response to reported child abuse.

INVESTIGATION

Internal Affairs investigated the allegation of inadequate response. The officer's demeanor and conduct were not in question; the issue was his understanding of pertinent law. The investigation revealed that the officer's response to the call did not rise to misconduct. However, it showed a training issue that could be addressed through training on child abuse laws, investigations, and policy.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The complaint was Administratively Suspended with the officer receiving remedial training from a detective in the Special Victims Unit. The training involved policy, investigative steps involved with child abuse investigations, and authorizations for emergency placement. The detective explained child abuse injuries, based on his extensive medical training, which would help the officer recognize abuse versus parental discipline.