



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHIEF OF POLICE
CRAIG N. MEIDL

Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C21-059 OPO Number: 21-28
Date of Complaint: 9/2/2021
Allegation: Inadequate Response and False or Misleading Statement
Chain of Command Finding: Inquiry
Final Discipline: Not Applicable

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS:

Officers contacted a person sleeping in their car that had registration for about nine months. The person had warrants for their arrest. The person told officers he was living in the vehicle and asked them to not tow it. At that time, the officers warned the person to get their car registered and go to court to address their outstanding warrants. A few hours later two different officers contacted the person, arrested them for their warrants, and had the car towed for expired registration.

COMPLAINT:

The complainant, a relative of the arrestee, said the person had been parked and living in his vehicle when it was towed. They cited a recent court case that they believed restricted the officers from towing away someone's homestead. The first officers said they would not tow the vehicle, but the second officer did tow the vehicle. The officer told the arrestee the vehicle was not being towed, but knew it actually was being towed.

INVESTIGATION:

Spokane Police Department Internal Affairs investigated this complaint. Police reports and body worn camera footage was reviewed. Several interviews were conducted.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION:

It was determined the allegation of inadequate response was unfounded as the legal authority to tow the vehicle was valid. Regarding the false or misleading statement, the officer said the statement of "not towing the vehicle" was used to help deescalate the arrestee who was angry at the time of the arrest.

