



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION
CHIEF OF POLICE
CRAIG N. MEIDL

Strategic Initiatives
August 2020 Report

Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing
August 3, 2020

Public Safety Building • 1100 W. Mallon Avenue • Spokane, Washington 99260-0001





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Selected Excerpts of Officer Commendation Letters

I just wanted to let you know what a great officer you have! She has been helping me with an issue I've been having with my neighbors and I am just so grateful for her! She has made herself available to me, messaged me back, and followed up. I mean, I am just blown away by how wonderful this person is. She is truly caring and is concerned for me and I just want someone to acknowledge her!! I mean talk about outstanding! I cannot stress enough how much she has helped me and really understood and empathized with what I'm going through. Her name is **Officer Deanna Storch**. Please forward this to her supervisor. Thank you so much!!

Chief Meidl, I have not met you personally but I have met many of the men and women who serve under your leadership. I am a property manager at one of the many affordable housing complexes here in Spokane. I have witnessed your leadership style on a weekly basis whether dealing with crime issues, teenagers, children, adults or at our resident meetings getting to know our tenants personally. I have initiated contact with law enforcement for mental health issues and out of control behaviors, criminal activity, child abuse or trespassed individuals. All of these encounters I personally experienced the quality of your team. On March 13th, 2020, our complex found that a wanted felony subject, considered armed and dangerous, was holed up in one of our units. SPD response was extremely fast, very professional, calm and thorough. All tenants were quietly evacuated without the subject being aware of any activity. Some were surprised by the great show of force by activating SWAT, K-9 units and multiple officers for "just one guy." The citizens of Spokane must understand that a show of force in this very dangerous situation actually helped to end this very quickly. The suspect took one look outside and immediately surrendered, walking backwards, hands clear anxious to be safely in a patrol car! Over in moments—once contact was made and everyone was in a safe location. Your officers demonstrated professionalism and care for our tenants and their children throughout the entire ordeal. **Neighborhood Resource Officers Traci Ponto and Charles Pavlischak** have often come out for cake and coffee, addressing our tenants regarding crime and block watch or special crime fighting opportunities such as paw patrol. With our population, this has helped to heal many fears and wounds caused by poor experiences and/or inferior authorities. Lastly, I must say it troubles me deeply to hear suggestions to defund or re-organize our police department. You and your team have been a vital part of our commitment to bring community to our complex specifically and to our city.

I was in a car crash and it was one of the worst days of my life. SPD was so reassuring. **Officer [Kris] Honaker** went above and beyond. He was so professional and caring. He took a very scary event and made it something that could be managed. I appreciated him.





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Internal Affairs Unit Update

January 1 through June 30, 2020 Commendations and Complaints

Commendations Received: **Total: 277**

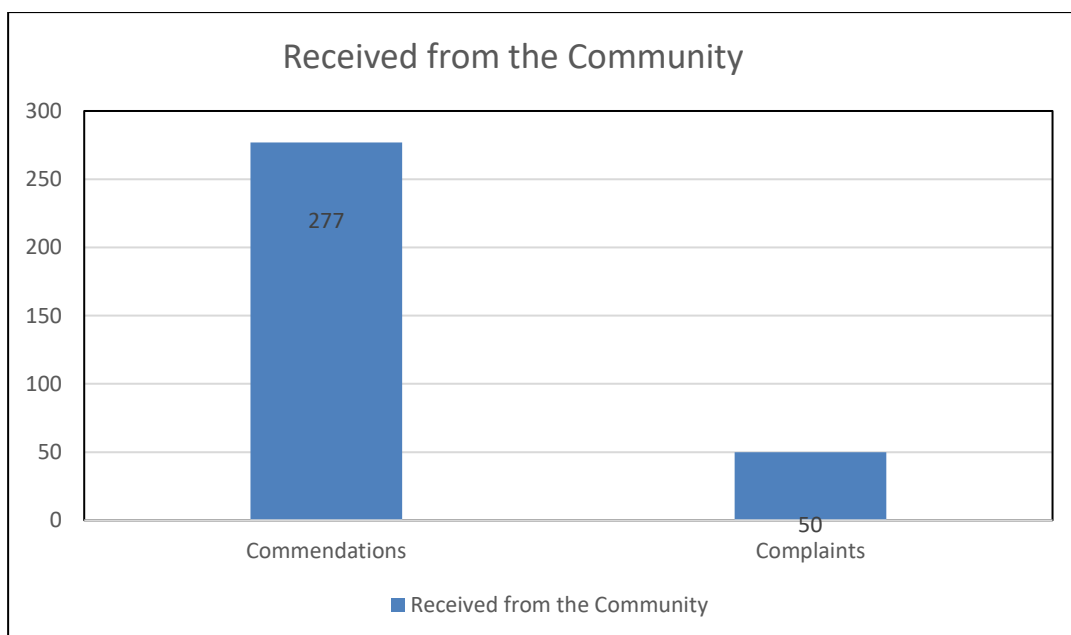
Complaints Received: **Total: 57 (50 from community)**

Closed Out as Inquiries: 5 (As of June 30, 2020)

An inquiry is an initial complaint about employee conduct which, even if true, would not qualify as a personnel complaint and may be handled informally by a department supervisor and shall not be considered complaints.

Source of June 30 through May 31, 2020 Complaints

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman | Total: 31 |
| Received by the Spokane Police Department | Total: 26 |
| Internally Generated by the SPD | Total: 7 |
| Generated by the Community | Total: 50 |





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Use of Force Update

2020 Non-Deadly Reportable Use of Force Incidents

From January 1-June 30, 2020, there were 31 non-deadly use of force incidents- 4 K9 contacts and 27 other (e.g., TASER, neck restraint).

2020 Deadly Use of Force Incidents

From January 1-June 30, 2020, there were no deadly force incidents. See below for active cases from 2019.

2019 Officer-Involved Shooting Incidents Update (through June 30, 2020)

These incidents took place in 2019 but are still active cases.

Incident 2019-20004372 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols)

Incident 2019-20004372 occurred on January 7, 2019, in the 600 block of West Montgomery. The Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team's (SIRR) criminal investigation is complete. The County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force as justified. Internal Affairs completed the administrative investigation. The case will be reviewed by a Deadly Force Review Board.

Incident 2019-20124831 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols)

Incident 2019-20124831 occurred on July 6, 2019, in the 1400 block of West 9th. The Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team (SIRR) criminal investigation is complete. The County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force as justified. Internal Affairs completed the administrative investigation. The case will be reviewed by a Deadly Force Review Board.

Incident 2019-20201879 (Pending Deadly Force Review Board- delayed by COVID-19 protocols)

Incident 2019-20201879 occurred on October 23, 2019, in the 3400 block of East Garnet. The Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team (SIRR) criminal investigation is complete. The County Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force as justified. Internal Affairs completed the administrative investigation. The case will be reviewed by a Deadly Force Review Board.





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Items of Interest

SPD highlights some of the strong work currently underway and completed toward reform

With calls for police reform at the forefront of national and local conversation, the Spokane Police Department is continually accessing its practices and policies. We have understandably received many questions about what SPD is doing and has done around police reform, including oversight, training, and culture. Provided in this release are answers to your questions noting, as United States attorney for the Eastern District of Washington, William D. Hyslop, recently stated, "This is not the first time we've had this discussion in Spokane. Significant changes in policing have **already been made**. Spokane is different from some other communities where change is being debated today. Spokane should not be swept up into a national tide of drastic change." "As we engage in today's discussion about policing, our city leaders are encouraged to be educated on the work that has preceded them and the many improvements that have brought the Spokane Police Department to today's model of professionalism and high standards of conduct."

"The department has made significant progress over the past several years and our officers are still the first to tell you we can be better," Spokane Police Chief Craig Meidl said. "Our officers, from the newest to the most senior, are committed to learning and improving every day. We have made that part of our culture."

1. What changes and third-party evaluation has SPD undergone in recent years, both as an internal effort to continually improve and in response to community calls for reform?

In 2013, the citizen Use of Force Commission, which included Mr. Hyslop before he became U.S. Attorney, presented **26 recommendations, which have all been completed**. They include; securing state accreditation, rewriting the SPD mission statement, reviewing staffing levels, updating certifications of defensive tactics instructors, improving training plans, and improving the use of force reporting system.

<https://my.spokanecity.org/news/stories/2015/03/24/use-of-force-commission-work-now-complete/>

In 2014, after being invited into the Spokane Police Department for a Collaborative Reform process, the United States Department of Justice COPS Office presented 42 recommendations (4 for the Office of the Police Ombudsman and 38 for the Spokane Police Department). **All 38 recommendations related to SPD were completed** by 2017.

<https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/police/accountability/spd-collaborative-reform-progress-report-2018.pdf>

On May 18, 2015, President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing released a final report identifying best practices and offering recommendations on how policing practices can promote effective crime reduction while building public trust

(<http://elearning-courses.net/iacp/html/webinarResources/170926/FinalReport21stCenturyPolicing.pdf>).





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Contained in the report were six pillars of 21st century policing and each pillar has 7 to 15 subsections (recommendations). SPD, on its own accord, **has implemented all recommendations** that pertain to a local law enforcement organization.

In 2015, the Spokane Department completed the deployment of body-worn cameras to all patrol. Currently, the majority of the police department is equipped with body-worn cameras and officers are required to turn on the cameras when engaged in law enforcement activity. The cameras help document officer actions and provide transparency.

Additionally, SPD has participated in four academic studies with partner universities. Arizona State University studied officer behavior and body-worn camera effectiveness in 2015; Washington State University engaged in counter-bias simulation and recognition study in 2016; Eastern Washington University analyzed officer contacts and race in 2017; and Gonzaga University conducted a cultural audit in 2017.

2. **What training model does SPD adopt and what training are officers provided?**

The Spokane Police Department has been asked about training a “warrior” mindset. SPD follows the training of the Washington Criminal Justice Training Commission. The mission of CJTC is “Training the Guardians of Democracy.” The commission has promoted the guardian philosophy of law enforcement for years. (<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/248654.pdf>). Spokane police officers are trained throughout the CJTC and after as **guardians of democracy** and trained in the Blue Courage philosophy (<https://bluecourage.com/>).

New police officers attend one of two local police academies sanctioned by the CJTC followed by Spokane PD specific training. All newly hired officers, lateral and entry level, are required to attend this three-week training which includes a session with a member or members of an impacted community. Part of the training is a reminder of the department’s community policing philosophy and the Chief’s commitment to our work with the community.

Officers receive a minimum of 24 hours of training each year. Topics of training include de-escalation training, decision-making, criminal law updates, driving refresher training, defensive tactics refresher training, and reality based training.

3. **How does SPD engage with the community and foster positive relationships with community members?**

The Spokane Police Department began the Police Activities League and the Youth Police Initiative 8 years ago wherein **officers and youth** engage in sports and other leisure activities while spending time in **meaningful conversations with the goal of building bridges between community and SPD**. These programs serve over 750 youth annually.

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=RfrMCA6kDsw&feature=emb_logo)

Additionally, SPD is involved in; Coffee with a Cop program in local coffee shops and grocery stores, National Night Out Against Crime and Get to Know Your NRO (Neighborhood Resource Officers) programs, Crime Prevention/Situational Awareness trainings for area businesses and social service agencies, Community Court – an alternative court model for cases arising out of low-level criminal violations or quality of life crimes, connecting individuals with community resources, COP TALK (Community Outreach to Patients through Affirmative Law Enforcement Conversations) program that focuses on de-escalation classes taught to patients at Eastern State Hospital, and more.





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Shortly after becoming Chief, Chief Meidl arranged numerous community forums in partnership with community leaders at a variety of locations to engage the community in conversation. These forums continued into late 2017 and were eventually discontinued due to lack of community involvement.

4. What are some of the key tenets of SPD's Use of force policy?

In 2019 the Spokane Police Department updated its Use of Force policy to include a De-escalation policy and an update to corresponding training. SPD is committed to accomplishing our mission with respect and a **minimal reliance on use of force** by using rapport-building communication, crisis intervention, and de-escalation tactics before resorting to force, when circumstances permit.

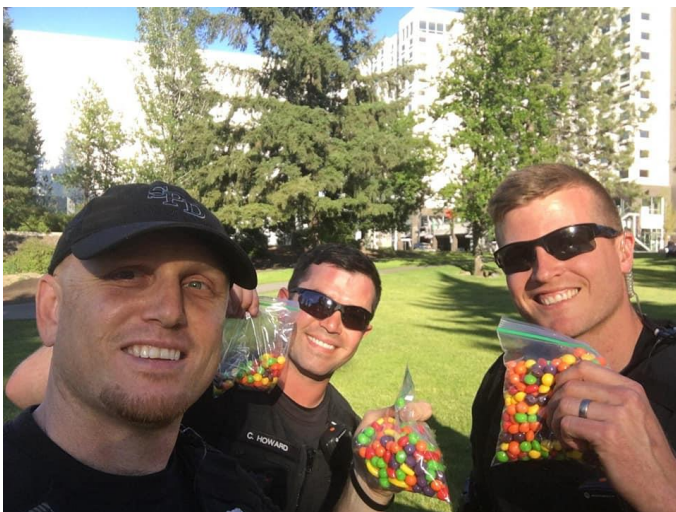
5. What are the demographics of SPD?

The department continues to recruit highly qualified applicants throughout the community to include at local universities, colleges and local events. Current demographics of the department's commissioned officers are representative of our population; 307 males, 34 females; 306 white, 13 Hispanic/Latino, 6 African American/black, 5 Native American, 4 multi-ethnic, 1 Asian and 6 other. Our current academy of 13 recruits includes two African American/black officers and four women.

6. How is SPD viewed by outside evaluators and regulators compared to other police departments?

In February of 2019, SPD was highlighted in the *Community Policing Dispatch*, which is the award-winning e-newsletter for the DOJ COPS Office. The title of this article, **Spokane Police Department: Reform at its Best**, highlighted SPD's "commitment to excellence", including "significant and permanent improvements." Additionally this article noted, "The SPD's use of force training requirements exceed accreditation standards and CRI-TA (DOJ Collaborative Reform) recommendations." This recent article highlighted many of the achievements obtained by SPD, even years after the Collaborative Reform work concluded. https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/02-2019/spokane_pd.html

Officers helping out at the Juneteenth Celebration in Riverfront Park.





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The current Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA) class added benches and a rose garden to the Officer Memorial at the Spokane Police Academy. What a great way to honor those that have sacrificed all to protect their communities.



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Precinct Highlights

South Precinct

Crime Prevention and Notable Arrests

Neighborhood Resource Officers (NROs) Mongan and Berrow had two great criminal interdictions resulting in traffic stops that led to three separate arrests. Both of those incidents resulted in search warrants for the vehicles.

- Two arrests were for Possession of Methamphetamine with Intent to Deliver, and also Unlawful Possession of a Firearm.
- The second traffic stop resulted in a foot pursuit that ended at the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center area. That suspect initiated a physical altercation which resulted in NRO Berrow receiving injuries/abrasions and a serious knee injury. NRO Berrow missed three weeks of work because of that and is currently on light duty now.

NRO Willard is working on NRO Berrow's cases while he is out, and he is also assigned to the unlawful camping pod. NRO Willard was assigned a Burglary case involving a pair of brothers the second week of June. NRO Willard worked with Officer Schwering, and they were able to arrest both brothers on probable cause they developed from the investigation. Both brothers were also charged with Possession of Meth as well. This case involved five search warrants being served on seized vehicles from two suspects.

The South Precinct is working with Browne's Addition Neighborhood Council on addressing problems in Coeur d'Alene Park. The Precinct has patrol officers checking on illegal campers in the park and other nuisance activity, while the neighbors are conducting block watch walks in the neighborhood and reporting back on what they are seeing.

Nuisance Properties

South Precinct staff are currently working on four nuisance properties on the South Hill, all involving drug activity.

North Precinct

Crime Prevention

The North Precinct is working on 32 significant community concern/neighborhood mitigation locations. These locations may be drug houses, nuisance properties, high victimization locations (businesses), or simple neighborhood disputes. Many involve a tremendous amount of documentation, nuisance notifications and abatement processes. Each location is assigned a Neighborhood Resource Officer (NRO). The NROs maintain a bi-weekly log reporting on their significant projects.

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Officer Cler: 4
Officer Howe: 5
Officer Kaurin: 6
Officer Pavlishchak: 6
Officer Storch: 8
Officer Wells: 3

Recently Crime Analysis was able to interface with City Parking Enforcement and 311. Using PowerBI software, our NROs are now able to see 311 parking/abandoned vehicle complaints on maps of their areas. Many times, community crime and nuisance issues may be related to an abandoned vehicle or RV. Predators will often use these locations for shelter, storage, or a jump off point to prey on neighborhoods. Using these maps/reports, NROs are now able to see potential vehicles involved in their community issues.

Downtown Precinct

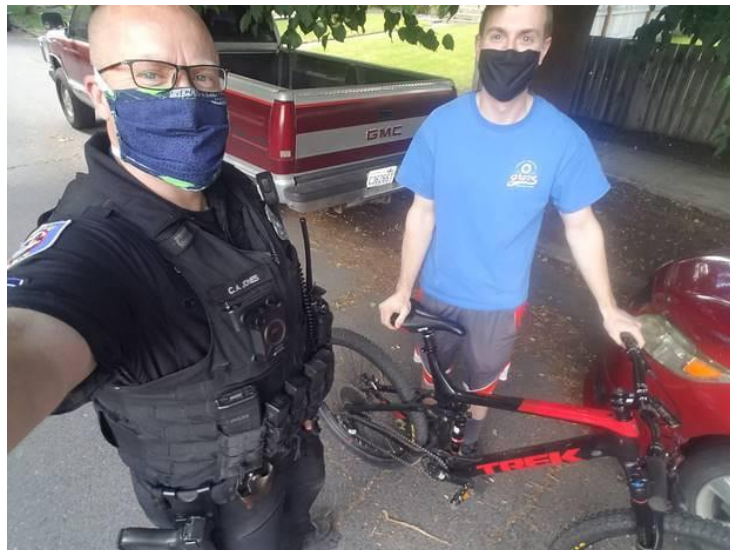
The Downtown Precinct staff are moving into their new location.

Notable Arrests

Neighborhood Resource Officer Casey Jones was featured in the following article. He is pictured below with the owner of the bike on a Facebook post.

Spokane Police officer finds, returns man's stolen bike worth thousands of dollars

<https://www.kxly.com/spokane-police-officer-finds-returns-mans-stolen-bike-worth-thousands-of-dollars/>





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Outreach Update

Shift of Community Outreach Unit during COVID-19

COU Officers are working the front desk at the Public Safety Building and are checking messages from community members.

If you or your loved ones have concerns regarding police enforcement of COVID-19 restrictions or simply have a question or rumor you'd like to have cleared up, please reach out to officers via the email address below:

spdcommunityoutreach@spokanepolice.org.

Recent Outreach during COVID-19

- Community Outreach officers met with Renee White, one of the activists from the Black Lives Matter protests. She was coordinating the red wagon meetings on Mondays. Officers spent approximately 3 hours with her. It was a good and productive meeting.
- Officers had pizza delivered to a Juneteenth celebration, the MLK Center, and West Central Community Center.
- The Community Outreach Unit started moving towards a cooperative program with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, called "Bigs in Blue."
- Online meetings continue for several organizations such as World Relief, Shadle Wellness Coalition, West Central Wellness Coalition, and NE Partners.
- Community Outreach Officers are connecting with youth at Crosswalk Youth Shelter, skate parks, and the STA plaza.
- Officers have been coordinating with SPD Investigations to do outreach with youth who frequently run away from home.
- Officers have been handing out food at many community locations

Police Activities League (PAL)

- SPD is planning on a condensed Summer PAL session for 2020 due to COVID-19 concerns. SPD is partnering with the YMCA and Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center to work with youth in their programs.
- PAL begins July 14 at the North YMCA /Holmberg Park and July 15 at Riverfront Park.
- The final celebration is tentatively planned for August 6, 2020.





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On June 25, Spokane Police Department Officers and Spokane County Sheriff's Office Deputies, as well as the Fire Department, helped twins, Emma and Noah, celebrate their birthday. The twins will remember this birthday!





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Below, an officer plays basketball with a youth in his neighborhood.



Notable News

Spokane Police Officers use Narcan to save lives of two apparent overdose victims in less than an hour
https://www.khq.com/news/spokane-police-officers-use-narcan-to-save-lives-of-two-apparent-overdose-victims-in-less/article_03203b3a-b179-11ea-b4e6-ffb356ee7839.html#:~:text=SPOKANE%2C%20Wash.,an%20hour%20of%20each%20other.&text=%22Narc an%20was%20administered%20by%20officers,SPD%20said%20in%20a%20release