



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

CHIEF OF POLICE

CRAIG N. MEIDL

Closed Use of Force Summary

Tracking Number: F19-081

Incident Number: 2019-20171245

Date of Incident: 9/7/2019

Chain of Command Finding: In Compliance with Policy

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

Officers responded to a Suicide call. The complainant called police stating her boyfriend was suicidal and had cut his throat. Officers responded and found that the male had barricaded himself inside the bathroom with a cutting instrument. Additionally, there was blood coming from the bathroom floor. Officers attempted to persuade the man to come out of the bathroom and receive treatment, but he refused multiple requests. Believing that the male was seriously injured and in need of immediate medical assistance, officers forced entry into the bathroom to render aid. Officers found him covered in blood with deep lacerations to his throat, arms, and leg. He was not responsive to commands. When the male became combative, one officer deployed his TASER to take him into custody in the most expeditious manner. Once he was handcuffed, officers began using tourniquets and other life-saving measures. Medical personnel provided additional aid and loaded him into an ambulance. Before leaving the scene, the male ceased to have a pulse. CPR was administered and he registered a faint pulse. He was transported to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.

The incident was investigated as an in-custody death. Critical incident protocol was invoked and a Spokane Investigative Regional Response Team investigation commenced. The autopsy report showed that the male died from loss of blood due to multiple self-inflicted wounds. The manner of death was listed as a suicide. The completed investigation was forwarded to the Spokane County Prosecutor's Office.

In the declination letter, the Spokane County Prosecutor's Office wrote, "In this case, the application of the TASER played no part in [the man's] death. He died from self-inflicted wounds. A review of the video and witness statements show that the officers involved acted within the law and their obligation as law enforcement. If anything, these officers acted above and beyond the call of duty. This matter is being returned to law enforcement to be closed."



After the Prosecutor's ruling, an internal Administrative Review Panel (ARP) was convened to review the case. The panel made recommendations to the Chief. They noted that the officer acted within the scope of law and SPD policy and training with the tactics to enter the bathroom and apply non-lethal force. The ARP stated that the officer acted reasonably and quickly to save the man's life. The TASER deployment was objectively reasonable under the circumstances to quickly overcome resistance and allow safe delivery of life saving aid. The Chief found the use of force within policy and stated that officers displayed compassionate initiative and bravery in their efforts to quickly render aid to the male.

