



January 13, 2021

Interim Chief Adrian Diaz  
Seattle Police Department  
PO Box 34986  
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Chief Diaz:

Please see the below Management Action Recommendation.

**Case Number**

- 2020OPA-0425 / 2021COMP-0004

**Topic**

- Screening SPD Social Media Posts

**Summary**

- It was alleged SPD was dishonest in an official Twitter post that stated protesters had thrown improvised explosives at officers alongside an image of two broken candles in a cardboard box.

**Analysis**

- The Named Employee (NE) made the Twitter post after receiving preliminary information that the candles may have been used in the explosion, possibly as a starter. The NE further stated that the Public Affairs unit was under enormous pressure to post information as quickly as possible.
- OPA found that while improvised explosives were thrown at officers during the protest, the candles recovered from the scene and pictured on Twitter were not the explosive devices that were used.
- [SPD Policy 1.110](#) states that information provided to the media must be accurate, objective and factual and instructs employees not to speculate. The policy also requires that the Chief of Police or a Deputy Chief screen information released to the media in an officer-involved shooting or where police activity results in serious injury or death. This requirement does not extend to other high-profile matters such as the incident at hand, or to information released on social media.

**Recommendation:**

- Require chain of command screening of all official Department social media posts concerning high-profile matters that are reasonably expected to impact community perception of SPD and its enforcement actions.
- Reiterate to both Public Affairs unit employees and command staff that while getting information out quickly is laudable, that desire should not undermine accuracy.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "AM".

Andrew Myerberg  
Director, Office of Police Accountability