



September 11, 2019

Director Andrew Myerberg  
Office of Police Accountability  
PO Box 34986  
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Director Myerberg,

Please see the below Management Action Recommendation response.

**Case Numbers**

- 2018OPA-0582 (2019COMP-0007)

**Topic**

- Roadblocks

**Summary of Management Action:**

- Employee used his patrol vehicle to partially block a road. SPD Policy does not define when a roadblock is consider a Use of Force, despite it being defined by the Force Review Unit as “when the vehicle blocks the entirety of the street, not just a portion.”

**OPA Recommendation:**

1. Define roadblock in policy, provide guidance on when its use is appropriate and clarify whether a roadblock only exists where the vehicle blocks the entirety of the road or whether a roadblock is present when the vehicle is blocking a portion or the majority of the road.
2. Modify SPD Policy 8.300-POL-6 to include reference to roadblocks and to classify roadblocks as a vehicle-related force tactic that may only be used when objectively reasonable under the totality of the circumstances.

**Action Taken:**

On August 16, 2019 revisions to Seattle Police Department Policies and Procedures Manual, Title 8 – Use of Force were approved by Federal Court Judge Robart.

1. Policy **8.050** now contains a definition of a roadblock (under vehicle tactics.) The definition is:
  - *“the intentional positioning of a police vehicle to obstruct the flow of traffic. A roadblock used on a fleeing or eluding vehicle is considered a use of force – the classification of force depends on the totality of the circumstances. Roadblocks used as force require approval of a lieutenant or above. Approval will be based on the severity of the crime and potential harm to occupants of the vehicle and the public.”*
2. Policy **8.300-POL-6(4)** has been amended to add “certain roadblocks” to this list of vehicle related force tactics that must be reported as a use of force. The section goes on to state that
  - *“Using a police vehicle for containment is not reported as a use of force.”*

**SPD Considers this Management Action:**

- Fully Implemented

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Lesley Cordner

Assistant Chief, Professional Standards Bureau