



2025 | Annual Report



**Seattle Office of
Inspector General**

2025 Annual Report

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Letter from the Inspector General



2025 stands as a defining milestone for the City of Seattle and the Office of Inspector General (OIG). The Federal Consent Decree governing the Seattle Police Department (SPD) was formally lifted, concluding 13 years of federal oversight and signaling the beginning of a new chapter for Seattle public safety.

This moment reflects more than the end of court supervision. As part of the Consent Decree journey, the City established oversight structures, including the creation of OIG. OIG as an independent, civilian-led team, was instrumental in informing the City in revising use-of-force policies, institutionalizing de-escalation and crisis-intervention training, and developing more robust approaches to crowd management. These efforts led the Department of Justice to determine that the City had achieved sustained and substantial compliance.

At the same time, 2025 reminded us that progress is continuous and never complete. Public trust was challenged following the Cal Anderson Event in May 2025, prompting OIG to initiate a Sentinel Event Review (SER). As one of our most rigorous accountability tools, SER brought community members and law enforcement together to objectively assess systemic issues in crowd management. SER reflects OIG's commitment to transparency, learning, and continuous improvement, particularly in a post-Consent Decree era.

Leadership transition also marked the year with the appointment of Shon Barnes as the 38th Chief of Police. Under new leadership, OIG has taken deliberate steps to build a collaborative yet independent relationship, one grounded in mutual respect and a shared responsibility to uphold police accountability.

With the conclusion of the Consent Decree, the City has regained full authority over SPD policies and practices. This transition places increased responsibility for the City and in substantial part, the OIG, to sustain and advance police reform. We look ahead with both confidence and purpose. The progress achieved during the Consent Decree provides a strong foundation, while reminding us that trust between the community and law enforcement can improve. OIG is committed to building trust and assuming key roles of federal oversight, with an unwavering dedication towards a safer Seattle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa A. Judge'.

Lisa A. Judge
Inspector General for Public Safety

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The Office of Inspector General for Public Safety (OIG) is tasked with systemic oversight of the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and Office of Police Accountability (OPA). In 2025, work in pursuit of our mission included ongoing review, assessments, and audits of SPD policies and practices, as well as certification of OPA investigations into alleged officer misconduct and oversight of certain investigations involving the Chief of Police.

Annual Report Requirements

Each year, OIG is required to produce an Annual Report describing our work. This includes audit and policy work with SPD and OPA, recommendations developed through OIG projects, and evaluation of the extent to which the accountability entities and SPD are fulfilling their obligations under the Accountability Ordinance. The Annual Report also includes review of trends in inquests, claims, and lawsuits alleging SPD misconduct, successful and emerging practices in other jurisdictions, and OIG review of the OPA complaint-handling system (see Appendix A for the full requirements).¹

Annual Report requirements are addressed in the following chapters:

- **Strategic Leadership:** Strategic work performed by the Inspector General (IG) to advance the OIG mission, represent the expertise of OIG in stakeholder activities, and prepare OIG to sustain critical reforms after the Consent Decree is lifted.
- **Audits:** Audits and assessments performed in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) and reviews guided by GAGAS principles.
- **Policy and Compliance:** Policy and research for innovation and improvement informed by emerging and standard practices and advancements from other jurisdictions, including major special projects that advance the Inspector General's vision for accountable policing and transitioning Consent Decree compliance responsibilities to OIG from the Federal Monitor.
- **OPA Review:** Review and certification of OPA complaint handling and the OIG complaint intake system.

¹ In 2024, OIG was reorganized into four functional work areas with staff conducting audits, policy, standards and compliance, and investigations and OPA investigation QA (see Appendix B for OIG organizational chart). As a small department, office staff are frequently cross-trained and able to assist on cross-disciplinary projects where needed.

HIGHLIGHTS

Strategic leadership at OIG ensures projects and priorities foster effective systemic oversight of SPD and OPA in an effort to strengthen public trust. In 2025, OIG monitored SPD use of force and actively collaborated with the City, Court Monitor, and other stakeholders to chart a sustainable path toward accountable policing.

Leadership and Collaboration

OIG leadership engages in strategic planning and conversations with stakeholders regarding the future of policing, SPD operations during and after the Consent Decree, and SPD administrative investigations of significant uses of force. Examples of leadership and collaboration include:

- Quarterly meetings with the Community Police Commission (CPC), OPA, and SPD leadership, providing strategic coordination and monitoring accountability recommendations from all oversight entities;
- Reporting to the City Council at public committee meetings, responding to their requests, and monitoring the implementing local ordinances related to the use by SPD;
- Participation in the City of Seattle (the City) state legislative agenda efforts;
- Regular meetings with SPD management and leadership;
- Community meetings and forums, and individual relationship building with community members; and
- Regular meetings with stakeholders.

Use of Force Oversight

The Accountability Ordinance specifically tasks OIG with evaluating SPD handling of serious uses of force. OIG reviews force by various means including on-scene IG presence at officer-involved shooting investigation scenes,² OIG staff presence during SPD internal use of force reviews, OIG audits, OIG review and certification of OPA investigations of allegations of officer misconduct, and IG technical assistance to SPD and other accountability partners around force-related matters.

The IG and/or her designee responds to investigation scenes of significant uses of force, such as officer-involved shootings, to provide independent observation of the investigation, and to ensure the scene is managed according to policy and accepted investigative protocols. Having civilian observers adds a layer of transparency to SPD operations to promote public trust and provides an opportunity for real-time civilian feedback with the ability to ask clarifying questions on issues of potential importance to the community.

OIG leadership attended Force Review Board (FRB) meetings and provided various types of feedback regarding FRB functions. FRB provides critique of and insight into SPD uses of force, helping SPD leadership and personnel learn from their experiences.

2 The ability to enter and observe an OIS scene, have access to all evidence, and observe scene investigation protocols has been curtailed by State legislation passed in 2021, mandating third party investigation and control of scenes and evidence. OIG and OPA are evaluating response protocols to continue providing oversight of SPD controlled OIS investigation processes, to include viewing available BWV and consultation with FIT investigators in real-time.

Operations: Communications & Community Engagement

OIG was created to ensure constitutional, accountable, effective, and respectful policing that reflects the values of Seattle’s diverse communities and engenders community trust and legitimacy. To that end, OIG strengthened communications and community engagement in 2025, striving to continue building community trust and maintaining existing community relationships. OIG worked towards improving internal and external transparency with accountability partners, the CPC, OPA, and SPD.

Statistical analysis, audits, and reviews of SPD systems can be technical and complex, and OIG strives for internal systems to be more easily accessible and navigable to the general public. OIG made great strides to improve digital accessibility compliance, provide accessibility training for staff, and plan for future communications needs.

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025, OIG released an audit report assessing both the effectiveness of SPD vehicle pursuits in apprehending suspects and the sufficiency of the department’s documentation and review processes. The office also completed several surveillance reviews, resulting in three individual technologies reports and one consolidated assessment. During the same period, OIG initiated new audit work examining overtime usage and Taser deployments. In addition, OIG successfully underwent peer review by the Association of Local Government Auditors (ALGA), which affirmed the effectiveness and sufficiency of our internal quality control system and adherence to accepted government auditing standards.

Audit Standards and Practices

OIG follows the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS) set by the United States Government Accountability Office, when conducting audits. These standards contain requirements for how OIG auditors perform their work, including independence, objectivity, standards of evidence, and reporting. Organizations conducting audits in compliance with GAGAS are also required to undergo an external peer review to provide assurance of compliance every three years. Reviews, memos, or other non-audit products issued by OIG follow similar evidence and quality control standards, but for various reasons do not fully meet GAGAS.

Completed Projects

Audit of SPD Vehicle Pursuits

This audit found that from early 2021 through mid-year 2024, SPD apprehended fleeing suspects in roughly half of vehicle pursuits, but most of these resulted from the suspect crashing or abandoning the vehicle rather than police intervention. The audit also found that unlike several other comparable police departments, SPD does not have a consistently available option to disengage from pursuits while maintaining visibility on a fleeing vehicle. Lastly, the audit noted that SPD has implemented a pursuit reporting system that is generally complete, accurate, and timely. In early 2026 OIG was recognized by ALGA with an ‘Exemplary’ Knighton award for this audit report.

Evaluation of City of Seattle Ordinance 126896 on Controlled Substances

In partnership with researchers from the University of Washington, this evaluation was the first of a required annual review of public safety responses to the City’s ordinance addressing knowing possession and use of controlled substances. While SPD diversions and arrests for public drug possession increased after the ordinance took effect in October 2023, data limitations prevented a full assessment of the ordinance’s effectiveness or impact. OIG and the research team will seek to resolve these limitations in subsequent reviews.

About > Audits

OIG conducts performance audits and reviews of SPD to determine the health of department systems and processes. Topics are selected based on an assessment of risk that considers the impact of a potential issue and likelihood of a system problem. OIG uses various methods, including interviews, data analysis, and best practices research to assess whether SPD is delivering “constitutional, professional, and effective police services consistent with best practices...in a way that reflects the values of Seattle’s diverse communities” as required by Ordinance 125315.

Review of Sustained Professionalism Allegations

In response to a CPC 2024 workplan request, OIG conducted a trend of sustained professionalism allegations. This review found that most sustained violations involved officers displaying antagonistic or disrespectful behavior toward community members, often accompanied by profanity. Professionalism-only violations largely resulted in reprimands, with only a few resulting in suspension.

OIG also found that while SPD conducted department-wide training for Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE), a peer intervention course, the program was never fully implemented.

Annual Surveillance Reviews

OIG issued its third set of Annual Surveillance Usage Reviews as required by SMC 14.18.060. Because these reviews examine usage from the prior year, all Annual Surveillance Usage Reviews examined usage from 2024 and were published in 2025. These reviews assessed 11 SPD technologies, including how data is shared and protected, and any potential for violation of civil liberties or disproportionate impacts resulting from use of the technology. Technologies reviewed include:

- Forward Looking Infrared Real-Time Video (FLIR)
- Situational Awareness Cameras Without Recording
- Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) - Patrol
- Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) - Parking Enforcement
- Audio Recording Systems (Wires)
- Camera Systems
- Computer Cellphone Mobile Device Extraction Tools
- Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs)
- Tracking Devices
- Callyo
- Hostage Negotiation Throw Phones

In late 2024, the Seattle City Council approved the acquisition of new technologies: Closed Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV) and Fusus Real-Time Crime Center Software. Because these new technologies were not used in 2024, there was no data to examine; however, since SPD used these technologies in 2025, OIG will conduct reviews annually starting in 2026.

Biannual Review of SPD Compliance with Chapter 14.12 of Seattle Municipal Code

Chapter 14.12 regulates SPD's collection of "restricted" and "private sexual" information. SPD must comply with ordinance requirements, including seeking authorization and regular purging. For the period of review, OIG found that SPD did not provide videos of a protected demonstration to the Criminal Intelligence Unit as required by policy but otherwise complied with ordinance requirements. OIG continues to advocate for review and revision of this antiquated ordinance to better reflect the state of information availability in the digital age.

ALGA Quarterly Article

In 2025, OIG collaborated with Chicago OIG to writing an article for the ALGA Quarterly about effective approaches for incorporating body-worn video (BWV) into audit practice. The article was published in the Summer 2025 ALGA Quarterly, and can be read here: [Using Body-Worn Camera Footage as Evidence in Auditing](#).

Projects in Progress

Significant work was performed on these projects in 2025.

Audit of Extended Leave Prior to Retirement

This audit examined controls for and impacts of extended periods of sick leave taken by officers prior to retirement. OIG completed fieldwork for this project in 2025 and published the full audit report in early 2026. Accordingly, it will be detailed in the OIG 2026 Annual Report.

Audit of Taser Effectiveness

This audit examines the effectiveness of Taser deployments in subduing subjects for custodial apprehension and will also review training and supervisory expectations relating to Taser usage. OIG anticipates this report will be published in the second half of 2026.

Deferred or Canceled Projects

These projects were included in the 2025 workplan but were deferred or cancelled, as explained below.

Community Crisis Responders (CCR) Dual-Dispatch

After consulting with Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) staff, shadowing CCR teams, and reviewing available data, OIG concluded that this topic was not yet suitable for audit. CCRs currently face significant impediments to fulfilling CARE's objectives, including unresolved data-privacy constraints and collective-bargaining limitations that restrict their ability to respond to certain calls. Given these conditions, OIG determined the issues would be better addressed through a policy report outlining the department's role, presenting early data on call types and outcomes, and describing the operational limitations the department encounters. That policy report is discussed in the Compliance & Policy section below. OIG will continue to monitor this as a horizon audit topic.

SPD Training Facilities

In 2024, SPD requested that OIG assess safety concerns at the Seattle Police Athletic Association (SPAA) firing range in Tukwila. During the interim, however, SPD began addressing many of the identified issues, making a formal audit of the facility premature. Remediation and repair efforts included contracting with a firm specializing in firing-range reclamation and maintenance, which rebuilt SPD-only berms and completed lead mitigation work. SPD also secured funding to rebuild the combat berms and undertook work to address recommendations from the City of Tukwila's 2021 environmental review.

Audit Recommendation Status

OIG performs annual recommendation follow-ups to assess implementation or to close outdated recommendations to SPD, OPA, or other public safety entities. In 2025, OIG issued seven new recommendations. A comprehensive snapshot of recommendation status is in Appendix C of this report.

CHAPTER 4: Compliance & Policy

HIGHLIGHTS

In September 2025, the U.S. District Court terminated the Consent Decree and monitoring duties fully transitioned to OIG. OIG continued efforts to ensure ongoing fidelity to the Consent Decree while responding to emerging issues identified by OIG, SPD, and other key stakeholders. OIG policy work focused on the evaluation of SPD policies and practices as compared to nationally recognized emerging practices, assessment of SPD and OPA processes, and review of proposed legislation related to police accountability and public safety by the state legislature and City Council.

Compliance and Policy Overview

In 2025, OIG combined its Standards & Compliance and Policy functions, resulting in a team of four analysts and one supervisor. The integration of two OIG teams expanded the expertise and capacity of policy work and oversight functions. This coincided with the full transition of monitoring responsibilities to OIG with the end of Federal oversight in September 2025. OIG continued to prioritize community and data driven policy projects and robust assessments of SPD and OPA. OIG also reviewed the city-wide response to individuals in crisis by providing an overview and preliminary analysis of the Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) Team.

Completed Projects

SPD Use of Force

OIG provided ongoing assessment of SPD internal review of force by evaluating the Force Review Board (FRB), including attendance at all FRB meetings, regular meetings with SPD leadership to communicate feedback and observations, attendance at the FRB annual training, and providing written feedback and recommendations in periodic FRB memoranda.

In 2025, OIG developed a research methodology to provide a more in-depth analysis of SPD use of force, with a greater focus on officer and subject characteristics. In 2026, OIG will implement this methodology and summarize the findings in a report.

Staffing Study of Sworn vs. Civilian Investigations of Police Misconduct

The 2017 Accountability Ordinance authorized civilian investigators in OPA and required OIG to conduct periodic assessments of the effectiveness of that civilianization. OIG published reports in 2023 and 2024 comparing OIG certifications for investigations led by sworn and civilian investigators. Those reports emphasized key limitations to OIG analysis of OPA civilianization related to the small sample size of available data. Specifically, the Seattle Police Officer Guild (SPOG) collective bargaining agreement (CBA) restricts the number and role of civilian investigators and there have been high attrition rates for civilian investigators.

Like the previous two reports, the 2025 assessment of OPA civilianization was limited by CBA restrictions and OPA hiring capacity. In 2025, OIG introduced a new approach to the evaluation and included insights, obtained by OPA staff interviews, into the motivation of OPA investigators for their

About Compliance & Policy

OIG produces policy reports, conducts research, and provides oversight that encourages innovation and improvement of policing for the benefit and protection of the community. To that end, OIG conducts data and policy analysis, collaborates with a range of stakeholders, and engages directly with community members.

oversight work, their understanding of OPA civilianization, and their experiences and opinions about the dynamics of working with investigators from both sworn and civilian backgrounds. OIG also developed recommendations based on these insights: reduce the disparity in compensation and benefits between OPA sworn and civilian personnel and provide staff with appropriate interview training.

Memorandum Addressing the Term “Excited Delirium” in Law Enforcement Contexts

In 2025, OIG completed a review of the history and use of the term “excited delirium” and other similar terminology in law enforcement contexts and offered recommendations to SPD and other involved City agencies. OIG chose to address the issue given emerging scientific understandings of “excited delirium” as medically unsound and disproportionately used to explain the deaths of Black men in police custody, as well as the use of “excited delirium” in training for SPD officers and 911 dispatchers, and in SPD policy as “acute behavior disorder.” OIG made a series of recommendations: SPD, SFD, and CARE should reject “excited delirium” as an acceptable terminology and remove both “excited delirium” and “acute behavior disorder” from trainings and policies; SPD should implement a tactical medical response policy that directs officers to explain symptoms they are witnessing without providing a medical diagnosis; and SPD should conduct an evaluation of past data to assess how the term has been applied, including any racial disparities in its use.

SPD Mapping

OIG developed an interactive organizational map that provides real-time information about SPD’s divisional structure and employee assignments. The application will be shared with SPD and used internally at OIG.

City of Seattle Crisis Response

In 2025, OIG provided an overview of the CARE Department and outlined future OIG work related to CARE. The report provided clarity regarding CARE’s scope of work and identified three main challenges that impact CARE: provisions in the contract between the City and SPOG, low deployment of CARE staff for eligible calls for service, and data collection restrictions. OIG plans to expand this work in 2026 by providing an in-depth comparative analysis of CARE and other 911-dispatched diversified crisis response programs and analyzing narratives written by CARE responders to identify what issues CARE is encountering most frequently and in which geographical locations.

Review of SPD Officer-Involved Collisions

OIG provided an overview of SPD policies for investigation and review of officer-involved collisions (OIC), as well as an exploratory analysis of data from collisions reviewed by the SPD Collision Review Board (CRB). OIG also summarized emerging practices for collision review, reviewed SPD policies and data, and compared SPD policy to emerging practices and policies in other jurisdictions.

Officer Involved Shootings with a Crisis Nexus

In the 2025 OIG workplan, OIG planned to adapt the SER Methodology to analyze officer involved shooting (OIS) incidents where there was an intersection with behavioral health crises. The ability of OIG to conduct a systemic review of these incidents was limited by the number of applicable incidents and the different circumstances of each case. OIG published a memorandum outlining these limitations and next steps.

Projects in Progress

Equity Assessment

OIG reviewed SPD efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace, evaluated the progress towards organizational DEI goals, and identified barriers to achieving those goals. The report found that while SPD has developed some systems to advance internal DEI, the systems have not been implemented or socialized department-wide largely due to inconsistent leadership commitment to and support for DEI work. OIG developed recommendations to support SPD in addressing the barriers to advancement of DEI. The report summarizing this review was published in February 2026.

Gender Disparity Analysis

OIG reviewed an SPD analysis that assessed progress toward and barriers to recruiting women into sworn ranks as part of the 30x30 Initiative.³ OIG also built on the analysis by comparing rates of wage growth, overtime hours, complaints received, and career duration between men and women. OIG plans to publish the report in early 2026.

SPD Crowd Management Review

In 2025, OIG continued to review SPD policies for crowd management and worked with Professor Clifford Stott to evaluate SPD response to crowd events throughout 2025.⁴

In November 2025, OIG conducted a Sentinel Event Review (SER) of SPD response to a rally in Cal Anderson Park on May 24, 2025, that resulted in significant community concern. OIG, in collaboration with a panel of community members and SPD, reviewed the incident to identify contributing factors resulting in the escalation of tensions and conflict, arrests, and use of force by SPD. Panelists identified 66 contributing factors related to: city park permitting procedures, lack of cultural context, unwarranted anticipatory defensiveness by SPD, and lack of differentiation between potential criminal wrongdoers and other members of the crowd. Panelists also made 24 recommendations that fell into four categories: community legitimacy, situational awareness, communication, and tactics.

The SER process was cut short due to a violation of ground rules by a panelist. As a result, panelists were unable to review a final incident and collectively determine recommendations. OIG conducted a separate analysis of the final incident with Professor Stott. Although the analysis did not reflect panelist views or statements, these were included for completeness of the review. OIG identified contributing factors that fell into six categories: communication, people and supervision, cultural leadership, tactics and procedures, equipment, and environment. OIG published the report summarizing this work in February 2026.

SPD Data Analytics Platform

In 2023, OIG reviewed the usability and accessibility of the SPD public dashboards. OIG identified suggestions that fell into five categories: understandable wording, clean data, clear presentation,

3 [30x30 | Women in Law Enforcement - Police | seattle.gov](#)

4 Professor Stott has worked with law enforcement in Sweden, Denmark, Ukraine, South Korea, the United Kingdom, and the European Union to implement dialogue policing models for public order management. Professor Stott has partnered with SPD and OIG since 2020 to implement SPD's dialogue policing program. In 2022, Professor Stott began working with the Columbus, Ohio Police Department to develop their [Public Order and Public Safety \(POPS\) model](#). In 2025, Professor Stott contracted with the Oregon's Portland Police Bureau to develop a dialogue policing program.

support of user goals, and accessibility standards. In 2025, OIG reviewed the implementation of those suggestions, provided an update, and included additional opportunities for usability and accessibility. OIG will share a summary of this work with SPD in early 2026.

Involuntary Treatment Act

In 2025, OIG reviewed SPD use of Involuntary Treatment Act (ITA)/emergent detention for crisis contacts.⁵ This included analysis of SPD data involving ITA. The report will also include future topics of evaluation. OIG plans to publish the report in early 2026.

State Legislative Agenda

Each year, OIG issues recommendations on the City’s State Legislative Agenda (SLA) and proposed state-level legislation related to police accountability and public safety. Priorities are determined by assessing themes of OIG work to identify areas where legislative efforts might improve systems of policing. OIG policy recommendations consider laws, police practices, and stakeholder input. OIG also reviews emerging legislation on police and police accountability nationwide to stay informed around evolving trends and practices.

In 2025, OIG consulted with a range of stakeholders to review legislation, including community-based organizations and public agencies such as the Washington Coalition for Police Accountability (WCPA), the Seattle Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR), the Office of the Mayor, OPA, and CPC.

Annual Trends in Inquests, Claims, and Lawsuits

OIG is required by ordinance to assess claims and lawsuits filed against SPD. In 2025, OIG published a descriptive analysis of claims and lawsuits filed against SPD between 2014 and 2023. The report examined claims alleging SPD excessive force, claims filed by SPD personnel, and those associated with protests and demonstrations. OIG also included reporting on SPD’s Early Intervention System (EIS), CRB, complaints filed with OPA, and the City’s Judgment and Claims Fund.

OIG conducts an ongoing assessment of complaint types, resolutions, and payments made by the City for claims and lawsuits filed by SPD personnel and by community members in response to police actions.

SPD Claims

Individuals alleging tortious conduct by SPD for incidents resulting in loss, injury, or damage must first file a claim with the City and go through the claims period before filing a lawsuit. Claims are reviewed and investigated by the Seattle Risk Management Office and can result in the City:

1. Paying a sum of money;
2. Transferring the claim to another entity; or
3. Denying the claim, finding no evidence of city negligence.

OIG reviewed claims and lawsuits against SPD for 2025. In 2025, Seattle Finance and Administrative Services (FAS) tracked 174 claims filed. As of the time of writing, 33 claims remain open and 141 have been closed; 33 of the claims made in 2025 have reached settlements with the City. Table 4.1 shows the number of claims made against SPD and payments made by the City from 2022–2025.

⁵ [RCW 71.05.153: Emergency detention of persons with behavioral health disorders—Procedure. \(Effective until July 1, 2026\).](#)

Table 4.1: SPD Claims and Payouts 2022-2025*

	Claims Filed	Claims Settled	Payment
2022	138	35	\$362,608
2023	206	120	\$2,063,850
2024	147	51	\$279,455
2025	174	44	\$411,221

*This table reflects the data available to OIG at the time of publication.

SPD Claims Related to 2020 Protests

OIG tracks claims related to protests. One protest-related claim was filed in 2025. OIG will continue to track protest-related claims.

Tort Claims

Tort claims involve allegations of personal injury and property damage related to SPD. These include allegations of police negligence unrelated to use of force, such as injury caused by an SPD employee in a traffic accident. In 2025, ten tort claims were filed against the City and five were closed. Two tort claims were filed in previous years and remained open in 2025.

SPD Lawsuits

Lawsuits brought as a result of SPD operations generally involve labor disputes, torts, or police action. In these cases, SPD is counseled and represented by the City Attorney’s Office (CAO) Civil Division. There are four possible resolutions for litigation: dismissed/no payment, settlement, judgment with payment, and judgment without payment.

Police Action Lawsuits

Police actions result from allegations that SPD operations, personnel actions, equipment, or vehicles were responsible for loss, injury, or damage. Ten police action cases were filed against the City in 2025; 19 police action lawsuits were filed in previous years and active in 2025. Six lawsuits were filed in previous years and resolved in 2025.

SPD Labor Lawsuits

In 2025, six lawsuits were filed, nine lawsuits remained open, and five were resolved. Of the resolved cases, one was dismissed with no payment, and four were settled. The total amount paid for the settlements was \$4,256,000.

Emerging and Standard Practices Research

OIG conducts research regarding emerging and standard practices for policing and public safety. Using sample policies and guidance from the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and surveys of policies in other jurisdictions, OIG also assesses SPD policy to identify potential gaps and improvements. In 2025, policy research included: Fourth Amendment protections; police interactions with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); vehicle impoundment; SPD rules regarding displays on department property; peer support communications; and international models for dialogue policing and crowd management.

Supervision

SPD has not fully implemented a new system for proactive management of risk. An OIG assessment is contingent upon SPD implementation of the platform. OIG will continue to monitor the rollout of the new system.

Investigations Bureau Assessment

In 2025, OIG identified areas of assessment of the SPD investigations bureau. In 2026, OIG plans to conduct an assessment that expands upon the findings of a 2023 SPD-commissioned assessment of the Sexual Assault Unit (SAU).

HIGHLIGHTS

OIG is committed to continuing work with OPA to achieve fair and consistent discipline outcomes, prioritizing issues that foster and maintain public trust. OIG found OPA conducted thorough, timely, and objective investigations achieving full certification in approximately 96.9% of cases for 2025.

Classification Review

Consistent and proper classification of complaints is a matter of public trust. Upon receiving a complaint, OPA conducts a preliminary review (an “intake”) to determine whether a full investigation or other resolution is appropriate to address the allegations. To ensure complaints are assessed in a fair manner and in accordance with OPA and SPD policies, OIG reviews OPA classification decisions to determine if the classification was appropriate, and whether OPA properly identified all allegations and associated employees.

Complaints routed for investigation are reviewed at the conclusion of the investigation and do not undergo prior classification review by OIG. In 2025, OIG evaluated 1,515 OPA classification decisions and certified 247 individual OPA investigations.

There are four primary classification types:

1. **Contact Log:** Used when a complaint does not involve an allegation of potential misconduct against an SPD employee or when there is insufficient information to proceed. OPA records the intake with a case number and sends the Complainant a closing letter but does not take any other action.
2. **Supervisor Action:** Used when the complaint involves a minor policy violation, or performance issue that OPA determines is best addressed by the employee’s Chain of Command, or to address allegations that are not a violation of policy but impact community experience or effectiveness. Supervisor Actions can include training, communication, or coaching. OPA may also issue an “FYI” Supervisor Action for a complaint deemed unfounded through the intake investigation that does not meet the criteria to be closed as a Contact Log.
3. **Expedited Investigation:** Used when the Complainant alleges a serious policy violation where preliminary evidence disproves the allegation or proves minor misconduct may have occurred, but OPA has determined the allegations are best handled through a training referral or management action rather than discipline. Expedited cases are reviewed by OIG simultaneously for both proper classification and certification of the investigation. If OIG disagrees with the classification, OPA must reclassify the case for further investigation.
4. **Investigation:** Used in cases of alleged serious misconduct, that, if true, would be a violation of SPD policy or law. Following an investigation, including interviews of witnesses and named

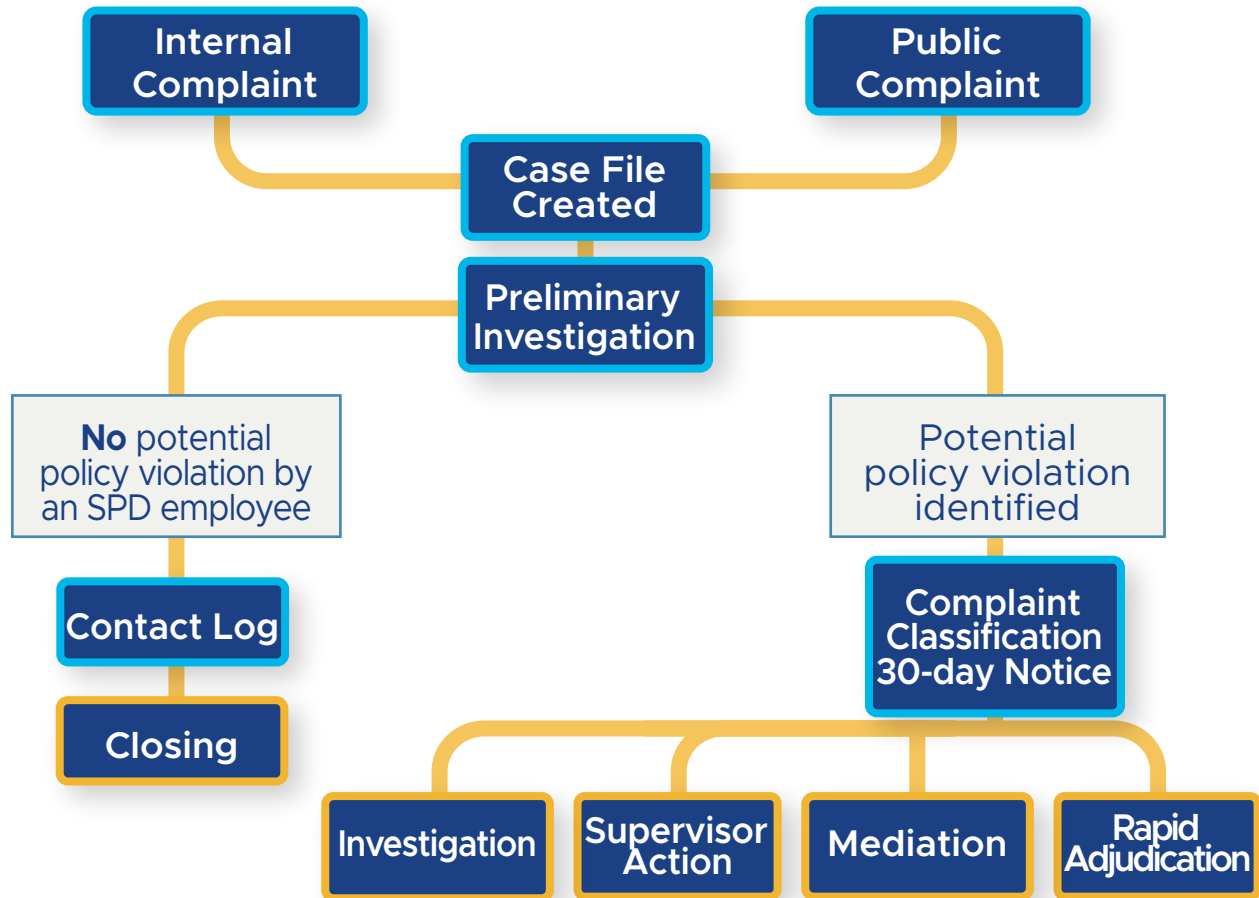
About ► OPA Review

OIG oversight of OPA ensures accountability at two critical junctures in the handling of misconduct allegations against SPD employees. First, OIG reviews the classification decision made by OPA to ensure a complaint is routed appropriately. Second, when an investigation is complete, OIG reviews the investigation, provides feedback, requests additional investigation when necessary, and certifies whether the investigation was thorough, timely, and objective. If a conflict of interest prevents OPA from handling a complaint made against one of its employees, OIG investigates the complaint. After assuming responsibility for investigation of a complaint, OIG follows the OPA process to maintain consistency in the system, with the same authority as OPA.

employees, OPA issues a recommended finding that could result in formal discipline by the Chief of Police.

OPA uses other case disposition programs including Rapid Adjudication and Mediation which are discussed further below.

Figure 5.1. OPA Case Intake Process



Classification Review Methodology

OPA began operating under a new manual in 2022. OPA previously used a 2016 court-approved manual which only identified two classification types: Supervisor Action and Investigation. Since 2016, OPA has created a new classification type, Expedited Investigation, and redefined the Contact Log classification from an administrative function into a classification type. When assessing classifications in 2025 for appropriate designation, OIG relied on the criteria outlined in the 2022 OPA Manual, the Accountability Ordinance, and on definitions created by OPA for new classifications.

In 2025, OIG reviewed OPA classification on a weekly basis except for Batch Contact Logs.⁶ OIG began this weekly method of classification review in mid-2022, which provides the opportunity for more timely feedback in situations where OIG does not concur with a classification decision.

⁶ Due to reduced staffing in Q1, OIG reviewed a statistically significant sample of the Batch Contact Logs. Beginning in Q2, staffing stabilized and Batch Contact Logs returned to weekly review.

Non-concurrence often leads to cases being reclassified. In 2025, OIG used the following review methodologies:

- Expedited Investigation: OPA proposes a case for expedited investigation, which is reviewed individually at the time of classification. If OIG does not concur with the proposed expedited status, OPA must reclassify the case for further investigation. OIG may also choose to expedite some case allegations, but not others.
- Supervisor Action: Reviewed individually on a weekly basis as OPA determines the classification. In instances where a case is classified as an investigation but also contains a Supervisor Action, OIG reviews the Supervisor Action at the time the Supervisor Action is added to the case file and reviews the remainder of the investigation upon completion.
- Contact Log: Reviewed individually on a weekly basis after OPA determines classification.
- Rapid Adjudication: Reviewed prior to official classification to ensure OIG agrees the complaint is appropriate to handle through Rapid Adjudication.
- Mediation: Reviewed on a quarterly basis.

OIG review of cases occurs at different intervals after a complaint is filed with OPA based on the classification type. For example, a contact log may be ready for OIG review in only a few days, while an Expedited Investigation is typically sent to OIG approximately 30 days after a complaint is filed with OPA. This can result in differing numbers of cases reviewed by OIG in 2024 from the number of cases OPA reports received or closed in a calendar year.

Classification Review Findings

In mid-2022, OIG began reviewing all classification decisions on a weekly basis. This practice continued through 2025, except for Batch Contact Logs, as mentioned above. Table 5.1 below provides review data by classification type.⁷

Table 5.1. OIG and OPA Classification Concurrence by Case Type

OPA Classification	Review by OIG	Level of Concurrence
Contact Log	135	98.5%
Batch Contact Logs	1,174	99.7%
Supervisor Action	138	96.4%
Expedited Investigation	138	100%
Bias Reviews	66	100%
Rapid Adjudication	1	100%
Mediation	1	100%
Total	1,653	

⁷ Prior to 2019, OIG conducted individual classification review, resulting in a high level of agreement because OIG provided real-time feedback to OPA prior to decisions. When OIG moved to quarterly sample review of classification decisions in 2019, retrospective assessment produced less concurrence and provided only opportunity for future improvement. In 2022, OIG returned to conducting individual classification review.

Expedited Investigations

In 2025, OIG concurred with 100% of cases (138 of 138 cases with an expedited request) designated for handling as Expedited Investigations (see table 5.1). Concurrence has slightly improved from 2024, when OIG concurred with 97.6% of cases proposed as Expedited.

In some proposed Expedited classifications, OIG did not initially concur due to insufficient evidence or other deficiencies, resulting in OIG requesting additional information from OPA. In these instances, OPA was able to remedy identified deficiencies prior to classification to gain concurrence and receive certification of the Expedited Investigation. In one case, OIG initially reviewed a case in 2025, but requested additional investigation and ultimately accepted the expedited request in 2026. Because the case was not certified in 2025, the case will be incorporated into data for 2026.

In other proposed Expedited Investigations, OIG did not concur with OPA's classification, and some expedited allegations were accepted for certain allegations but not for others. In these cases, OPA received a certification for allegations accepted as an Expedited Investigation, with the case then bifurcated and the remaining allegations fully investigated. In 2025, OIG issued multiple certifications for ten individual cases, the same number as 2024.

Contact Logs

A Contact Log classification can be handled in two ways. Complaints with sufficient information to evaluate and undergo a full intake process are assigned a case number (135 in 2025). Complaints that do not meet the low threshold to allow for evaluation are not assigned a case number and are stored in a Batch Log (1,515 cases in 2025).

The Batch Log is for general contacts with OPA where no policy violations are alleged. These contacts are compiled under a single IPro case file. Beginning in 2024, OIG faced limited staffing that no longer allowed for weekly reviews of contact logs stored in the Batch Log. OIG then reviewed a statistically significant sample during Q1 2025 but returned to conducting weekly reviews in Q2 2025 when staffing allowed.

OPA appears to use the Contact Log classification appropriately, as OIG had about 99.7% concurrence with Batch Log classification and about 98.5% concurrence with contact log classification in 2025.

Supervisor Actions

In 2025, OIG's rate of concurrence for Supervisor Actions was 96.4%. OIG reviewed Supervisor Action classifications on a weekly basis, providing timely review shortly after classification. OIG also reviewed Supervisor Actions that were part of higher levels of classification (such as Investigations and Expedited Investigations) to ensure Supervisor Actions were reviewed in a timely manner, and not at the conclusion of the investigation. The 138 total reviewed in 2025 reflects the number of cases involving at least one Supervisor Action. In some cases, multiple Supervisor Actions might have been issued under the same case number, such as if multiple employees had failed to complete training by the required date, so the actual number of Supervisor Actions issued is higher than the number of cases reviewed by OIG.

Investigation Review

OIG certifies whether OPA investigations are timely, thorough, and objective using criteria delineated in the Accountability Ordinance, including whether:

- Witnesses were contacted, interviewed, and all other material evidence was collected in a timely manner.
- Interviews were thorough and unbiased, conflicting testimony was sufficiently addressed, and OPA investigators did not shy away from asking challenging and necessary questions.
- Additional clarifying information would strengthen the investigation.
- The written summary and analysis are objective and accurately reflect the evidence.
- Applicable OPA procedures were followed, and the intake and investigation were conducted in accordance with the OPA Manual.

Investigation Review Methodology

OIG considers each investigation on a case-by-case basis to assess whether OPA has sufficiently addressed the allegations brought forward in accordance with relevant rules, policies, and ordinance requirements to achieve procedural justice.

When examining the timeliness of OPA investigations, OIG examines whether:

- Completion of the investigation is within 180 days, minus any period in which an extension was granted or time was tolled.
- Complaints are classified within 30 calendar days after receipt.
- Named employees are notified of complaints against them by the time classification occurs.
- Named employees are notified in advance of interviews in accordance with labor contract requirements; and investigations are submitted to OIG in a timely manner to afford sufficient time for feedback and additional OPA investigation if requested or directed by OIG.

When assessing the thoroughness of OPA investigations, OIG examines whether:

- All allegations are identified, and each allegation is sufficiently addressed.
- Investigation steps are clearly documented.
- Relevant evidence is collected and accurately reflected in the OPA report.
- Interviews are comprehensive.
- Complainants are offered the chance to be interviewed regarding their allegations.
- Perishable evidence has been preserved where possible.

When assessing the objectivity of OPA investigations, OIG examines whether:

- The investigation includes all relevant evidence.
- Facts and analysis are conveyed in a manner that does not express or indicate bias.
- Conflicting testimony has been addressed.
- Interviews do not use leading or suggestive questions.
- The intake and investigative process complied with policies in the OPA Manual.
- Complainants and employees are treated fairly and equitably in interviews.

During the review process, OIG feedback to OPA may include formal requests (e.g., a memo

directing additional investigation) and informal requests or inquiries via email or meetings. If OIG identifies a deficiency that would impact the certification or case outcome, OIG will formally direct additional investigation or require modifications to the investigative record. In such cases, after being provided with the opportunity to resolve any identified deficiencies, OPA resubmits the case to OIG for review and a certification decision.

Informally, OIG may offer suggestions regarding further investigative steps, request minor fixes to the investigative record, or provide feedback for future cases.

Investigation Review Findings

In 2025, OIG issued 259 certifications for 247 cases, with ten bifurcated cases receiving multiple certifications. As depicted in Table 5.2, approximately 54.83% (142 out of 259 cases) of all certifications in 2025 were for allegations handled as Expedited Investigations. The remaining 45.17% were full Investigations. Table 5.2 represents all certifications issued by OIG in 2025, as the ten bifurcated cases received more than one certification. Overall, approximately 96.91% of certifications issued by OIG found OPA investigations to be objective, thorough, and timely.

Table 5.2. Certification Review Outcomes by Investigation Type⁸

Case Type	OIG Certifications	Full Certification	Partial Certification	Null Certification
Expedited Investigation	142	141	1	0
Investigation	117	110	6	1
Total	259	251 (96.91%)	7 (2.70%)	1 (0.39%)

Partial Certifications

OIG issued seven partial certifications and one null certification in 2025. The main certification deficiency was the objectivity of investigations, with five cases (1.93% overall) not meeting OIG’s standards for objectivity. Previously, OPA saw timeliness as their biggest area of deficiency, but with the removal of the five-day notice requirement for cases in 2024, OPA has seen major improvements in that area and only had four investigations not meet timeline standards (1.54% overall). Finally, three cases did not meet OIG’s thoroughness standards (1.16% of cases overall). The number of partial and null certifications issued in 2025 was 8 of 259 certifications issued (3.09%) and is an improvement from 14 of 286 certifications issued previously (4.9%).

⁸ Table 5.2 provides a breakdown of certifications issued by OIG, rather than total number of cases reviewed. Eighteen cases were bifurcated and receive more than one certification.

Table 5.3. Certification Issues by Category

OIG Certifications	Total Count	% of Total Cases
Partial: Not Objective	2	0.77%
Partial: Not Thorough	2	0.77%
Partial: Not Timely	3	1.16%
Null: Not Objective, Thorough, or Timely	1	0.39%
Subtotal	8	3.09%
Full: Timely, Thorough & Objective	251	96.91%
Total Certifications Issued by OIG	259	100%

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

Alternative Programs

Rapid Adjudication

In 2019, OPA began the Rapid Adjudication program. The program is described in the Seattle Police Officers Guild (SPOG), Seattle Police Management Association (SPMA) Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA), and on OPA’s website. Rapid Adjudication is an option for employees who acknowledge their conduct was inconsistent with policy and accept discipline without undergoing an investigation by OPA. Rapid Adjudication can be initiated by the involved employee or by OPA.

In 2025, one case was sent to OIG requesting review for Rapid Adjudication, after OIG had already approved an Expedited Investigation classification for other allegations in the case. OIG approved the Rapid Adjudication classification for the remaining allegations.

Mediation

OPA may offer mediation to resolve disagreements (especially those involving possible miscommunication or misperception) with the guidance of a neutral third party. When accepted by both the complainant and officer, mediation provides final resolution of the case.

In 2025, one case was successfully resolved by OPA through this alternative resolution program. OIG will continue to review implementation of this program. While Mediation is not appropriate for some allegation types, OIG encourages OPA to continue developing and utilizing this program. Mediation offers complainants and SPD employees the opportunity to share their perspectives as an opportunity to foster mutual understanding and greater public trust.

Bias Reviews

Bias-free policing and appropriate attention to bias allegations are integral to police accountability and public trust. While Bias Reviews are not an official OPA classification, they are one of two processes by which biased-based policing allegations against SPD personnel can be addressed: Complainants may make complaints to SPD employees on-scene, which follow the Bias Review process, or file a complaint directly with OPA.

Bias Reviews are an internal process specified in SPD policy. When a community member alleges bias-based policing, a supervisor must be called to the scene to conduct a preliminary investigation. The reviewing supervisor discusses the allegation with the individual and explains the option to file a complaint with OPA. If the community member does not ask that the matter be referred to OPA, and if the supervisor determines through a preliminary investigation that no misconduct occurred, the supervisor will resolve the matter by completing and submitting a Bias Review Template. If the individual does not cooperate with the Supervisor or has left the scene, the Supervisor is required to review BWV to assess the incident and complete the template. The completed templates are reviewed by the Chain of Command and submitted to OPA for review prior to being closed.

In 2025, OIG reviewed each Bias Review that was sent to OPA. OIG's reviews were conducted on a weekly basis. OIG concurred with OPA's determination for all Bias Reviews in 2025.

OIG Investigations and Complaint Intake

OIG Investigations

OIG opened two cases in 2025. Both cases were classified as Supervisor Action and are considered closed. OIG also concluded the investigatory process for one case that is awaiting finalization.

Chief of Police Complaints

In 2022, the City Council passed City of Seattle Ordinance 126628, which provides OPA and OIG authority and guidance to investigate complaints against the Chief of Police. OIG is required to provide oversight of the intake process for such complaints, ensuring they are handled timely and assigned for investigation appropriately. When handled by an outside investigator, OIG or OPA can manage the process with OIG making the required notifications to involved employees and stakeholders. Starting in 2025, OIG began publishing quarterly reports discussing Chief of Police complaints in further detail.⁹

OIG is required to report the number of complaints against the Chief resolved through a Contact Log classification. In 2025, 29 complaints against the Chief were closed as Contact Logs.

Complaint Hotline

The Accountability Ordinance requires OIG to maintain a hotline for community inquiries and complaints against SPD.¹⁰ OIG received around 1,925 calls, emails, and online submissions¹¹ in 2025. These complaints are triaged and either handled by OIG staff or routed to the appropriate department.

⁹ The most recent report, Complaints Against the Chief of Police Q4 2025, details complaints for the entirety of 2025.

¹⁰ Ordinance 125315, 3.29.200 ¶18.

¹¹ In March 2025, OIG launched a web portal allowing individuals to submit complaints and inquiries online.

Additional Issues

Bias Review Incident

In March of 2025, OPA notified OIG that a significant number of Bias Review documents had not been properly reviewed by the previous OPA Director.¹² OIG conducted a full review of the Bias Reviews in question as well as an evaluation of the OPA Bias Review process. OIG published a report in February 2026.¹³

Null Certification

In 2025, OIG issued one Null Certification.¹⁴ The investigation was presented to OIG with an allegation missing, rendering the investigation “not thorough.” Additionally, the investigation was sent to OIG past the 180-day time limit imposed by bargaining agreements making the investigation untimely. Lastly, the interview of the Complainant was determined by OIG to be not objective. OPA was unable to remedy these deficiencies resulting in the Null Certification.

Mediation Notes

The OPA Internal Operations and Training Manual requires a mediation that fails for any reason be classified for a full investigation.¹⁵ In 2024, OPA had one mediation scheduled that did not ultimately take place.¹⁶ The Complainant changed their mind and determined mediation was not the way they wanted to proceed with their complaint, whereupon the case was closed by OPA. OIG considered this a failed mediation and communicated to OPA the complaint should have been opened as an investigation as required by OPA’s manual. While the SPOG CBA prohibits discipline from being imposed in an instance such as this,¹⁷ process does not prohibit OPA from moving ahead with an investigation. OPA informed OIG they do not consider this a failed mediation, as everything was scheduled before the Complainant changed their mind and discipline was no longer possible. OPA and OIG remain in disagreement over this interpretation of what constitutes a failed mediation and will continue to dialogue.

12 Gino Betts was the OPA Director during the period between August 1, 2022, and November 30, 2024.

13 [Evaluation of OPA Bias Review Process](#).

14 A Null Certification is given to an OPA investigation when OIG is unable to certify it on any of the three elements of thoroughness, timeliness, and objectivity.

15 OPA Internal Operations and Training Manual section 8.4.

16 While the mediation was scheduled to take place toward the end of 2024, OIG was not made aware of it until early 2025. OIG now queries OPA’s database for mediations on a quarterly basis.

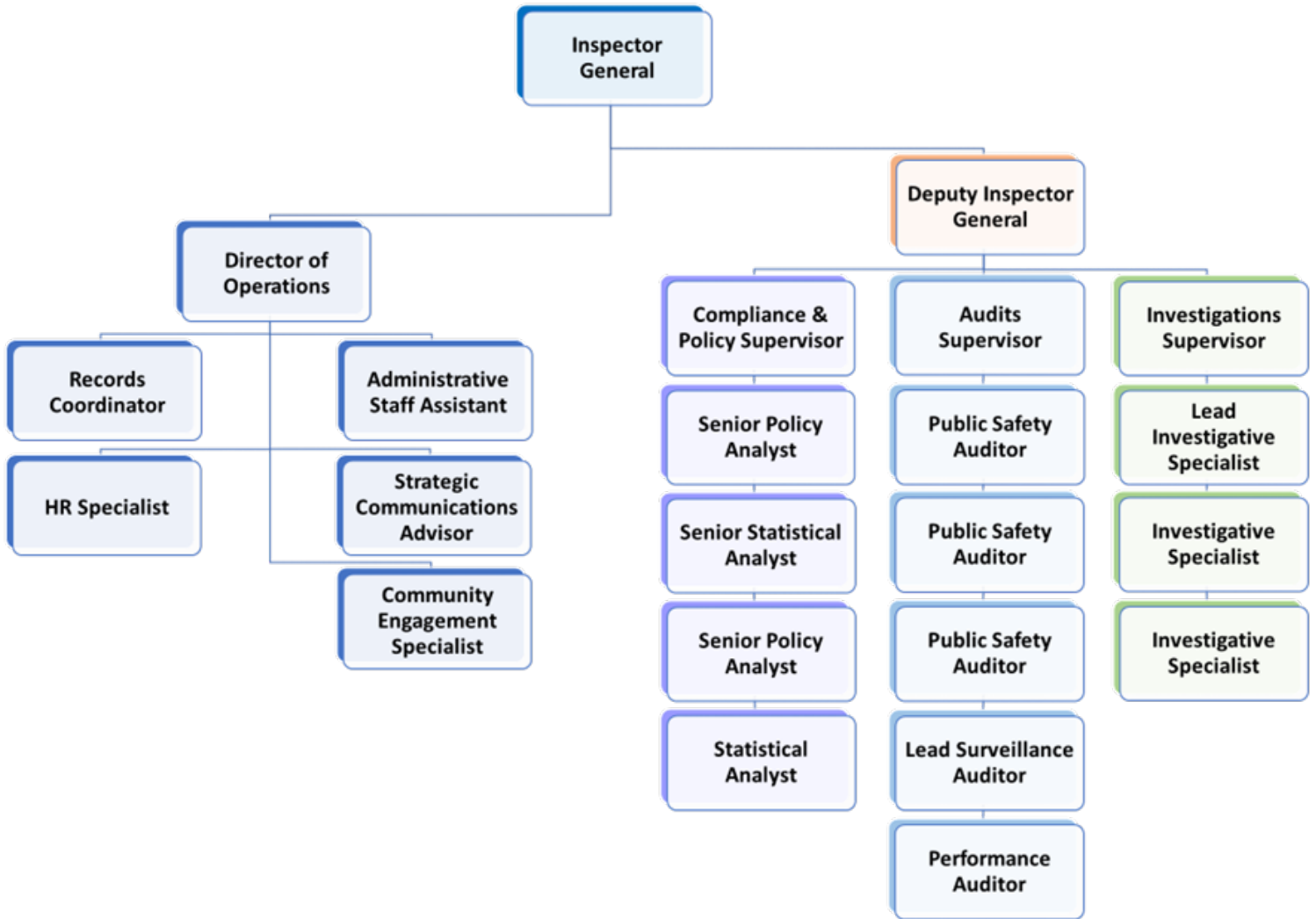
17 Seattle Police Officer’s Guild Collective Bargaining Agreement section 3.10.

Ordinance 125315, §3.29.270.D

The Inspector General shall produce annual reports that are readily understandable and useful to policymakers. The annual report shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. A summary of OIG's audit and review activities for the previous year;
2. An evaluation of the extent to which the purposes, duties, and responsibilities detailed in this Chapter 3.29 have been met by the responsible entities;
3. A description of the work of OIG in fulfilling OIG's purpose, duties, and responsibilities detailed in this Chapter 3.29;
4. Inspector General recommendations for changes in policies and practices, collective bargaining agreements, City ordinances, and state laws;
5. A summary of the implementation status of any previous OIG recommendations, and for any that have not been implemented, the reasons;
6. A summary of OIG's review and the outcome of SPD reviews for officer-involved shootings, in-custody deaths, and any other cases of significant public concern;
7. An analysis of any patterns and trends of disproportionality or other concerns compared to previous years, including from review of inquests, claims and lawsuits alleging SPD misconduct;
8. The outcome of reviews of successful practices in other jurisdictions, and any associated OIG recommendations, including changes in the mix of OPA sworn and civilian staff;
9. A summary of information received from OIG's hotline, any of its other anonymous intake systems, and from community outreach that has informed OIG's work; and
10. A summary of OIG's review of OPA's complaint handling system, including at a minimum:
 - a. The number of investigations reviewed;
 - b. A general description of the complaints and cases reviewed by OIG;
 - c. A description of OPA's follow-up for those cases which OIG did not certify and those cases for which OIG requested or required further investigation;
 - d. A review of cases not investigated by OPA, including Contact Logs, Supervisor Action referrals, Mediation, Rapid Adjudication, Management Actions and Training Referrals; and
 - e. A description of any concerns or trends noted in OPA complaint intake and investigations.

Seattle Office of Inspector General 2025 Organizational Chart



APPENDIX C

Status of OIG Recommendations

Report with Recommendations	Year	Fully Implemented	Open/Pending	Closed: Non-Concur	Closed: Admin
Chapter 14.12 Compliance	Reoccurring	5	4	2	
Surveillance Technologies (All Reports)	Reoccurring	2	12	1	10
Audit of Disciplinary Determinations for SPD Sworn Personnel	2021, 2024	5	7		
Audit of SPD Compliance with Youth Access to Legal Counsel Requirements	2023		8		
Audit of Secure Firearm Storage in Training Facilities	2021	3	3		
Audit of Destruction of Post Conviction DNA Evidence	2020	1	2		
Audit of SPD Patrol Canine Teams	2019	11	3		1
Audit of SPD Vehicle Pursuits	2025		4		
Audit of SPD Extended Sick Leave Use Prior to Retirement	2026		2		
Total		27	45	3	11

Recommendation Status Definitions:

- **Open/Pending:** SPD has received or is currently working to implement the recommendation. OIG will follow up on the recommendation in the future.
- **Partially Implemented:** SPD implemented part of the recommendation and provided rationale for why the recommendation was not fully implemented. OIG will no longer request updates.
- **Fully Implemented:** OIG has determined that the recommendation or the intent of the recommendation has been met. OIG will no longer request updates.
- **Closed – Administrative:** The recommendation is no longer relevant or feasible.
- **Closed – Non-Concur:** SPD management does not agree with the recommendation and does not intend to implement the recommendation.