



Seattle Office of
Inspector General

2025 Sentinel Event Review Status Memo

April 18, 2025



Seattle Office of Inspector General

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The process of Sentinel Event Review (SER) is a collaborative stakeholder effort to identify causes and contributing factors of undesired incidents with the goal of prevention. SERs are used extensively in other fields, including aviation, health care and manufacturing, to identify root causes of significant events and to design systemic improvements to prevent their recurrence.

Between 2021 and 2023, the Office of Inspector General (OIG), in collaboration with community members and the Seattle Police Department (SPD), conducted a series of SERs to review SPD response to the sustained protests in the wake of George Floyd's murder. OIG convened stakeholders into a planning group to identify key incidents causing community concern. A panel of community members, SPD, and Inspector General Judge reviewed each incident to identify contributing factors and recommendations for systemic improvements. SPD issued a comprehensive response to all 136 SER recommendations in July 2023.

In the OIG 2025 workplan, OIG planned to adapt this SER methodology to analyze officer-involved shooting (OIS) incidents where there is an intersection with behavioral health crises.¹ The stated aim of this project is to identify ways SPD and public safety partners can better respond to calls involving subjects in crisis through collaborative analysis with mental health experts, community members, and SPD.

In 2024, OIG published an assessment of SPD's response to individuals in crisis between 2021 and 2023.² In that period, SPD responded to a yearly average of 10,153 crisis contacts (constituting between 3.14% and 3.7% of total SPD contacts).³ Fewer than two percent of these crisis contacts included any reportable level of force. Of the incidents involving force:

- Type II uses of force occurred in less than 37% of contacts.
- Type III uses of force, including OIS, occurred in less than 2% of contacts.
- Three Type III (OIS) incidents between 2021 and 2023 involved subjects in crisis.

The ability of OIG to conduct systemic review of OIS incidents involving subjects in crisis is limited by the number of applicable incidents and the differing circumstances for each case. Assessment of SPD crisis response remains critical, particularly as the City of Seattle (City) develops alternatives to police-only models to lessen reliance on law enforcement.

Since 2012, the SPD Crisis Response Team (CRT) has paired mental health professionals with officers trained in crisis intervention to respond together to high-acuity crisis calls. In 2023, the City introduced the Community Assisted Response and Engagement (CARE) team as the third branch of public safety, with Community Crisis Responders (CCRs) responding separately to low-acuity,

1 [OIG 2025 WorkPlan pdf](#)

2 [Seattle Police Department Crisis Assessment pdf](#)

3 SPD records and calculates force data for situations with multiple involved officers, multiple applications of force per officer, and/or multiple objects. SPD counts force statistics based on individual officer Use of Force Reports, with each use of force constituting a combination of a unique officer, unique subject, and unique incident. SPD categorizes force according to the severity and significance of the force used with the following terms: de minimis, Type I, Type II, Type III, Type III OIS. De minimis force does not require force reporting and therefore will not be included in force counts. Type I force is the lowest level and includes firearm pointing and force that causes transitory pain or complaint of transitory pain. Type II includes force that is reasonably expected to cause greater than transitory pain but less than great or substantial bodily harm, such as a Taser or 40-millimeter launcher use. Type III is the most serious force and causes or is reasonably expected to cause great bodily harm, substantial bodily harm, loss of consciousness, or death. Type III (OIS) includes potentially lethal force by discharge of a firearm.



non-emergency crisis calls in alternative or dual dispatch models. In addition to the planned audit of CCR effectiveness, OIG will develop methodologies for ongoing evaluation of these diversified approaches to crisis response and intervention in 2025. An evaluation of Type III (OIS) crisis incidents will be included in this methodology. OIG believes the SER process adds significant value to a comprehensive review of critical incidents for both community and SPD, and intends to apply this model to future projects when feasible.