



May 29, 2024

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

- 2022OPA-0033 / 2024COMP-0002

Topic

- Spit Sock Use

Summary

- It was alleged that a named employee used a pillow to shield against a subject who repeatedly removed a spit sock and spat at officers.

Analysis

- During transport to Harborview Medical Center, the subject removed a spit sock three times.
- A named employee held a pillow close to the spitting subject's face to shield himself while the spit sock was reapplied. However, the optics of covering the subject's face with a pillow may be problematic for onlooking community members. For the same reason, the department trains officers against reaching across someone's neck to check their pulse—to avoid the appearance of an officer choking someone.
- OPA found no policy, training, or guidance concerning how officers should respond to failed or ineffective spit sock applications.¹

Recommendations

- OPA recommends SPD consider providing policy, training, or guidance to officers for responding to failed or ineffective spit sock applications. Training should encourage critical thinking and problem-solving and identify acceptable improvised shields.

I appreciate your consideration, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gino Betts, Jr.".

Gino Betts, Jr.
Director, Office of Police Accountability

¹ A 2023 e-Learning Video on Spit Sock addresses several spit sock concerns, except how to respond when it is ineffective.