



## Seattle Office of Police Accountability

---

August 26, 2025

Chief Shon F. Barnes  
Seattle Police Department  
PO Box 34986  
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

Dear Chief Barnes:

Please see the Management Action Recommendation below.

### Case Number

- 2024OPA-0393 / 2025COMP-0014

### Topic

Canine Certification Procedures

### Summary

- It was alleged that an SPD Canine Officer and a King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) Deputy altered or falsified test scores when certifying canines for explosive detection.

### Analysis

- OPA's investigation found insufficient evidence to conclude that the SPD Canine Officer acted dishonestly or that his behavior undermined public trust in canine certification testing.
- OPA's investigation identified relevant Washington Administrative Code (WAC) and Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) standards for certifying canines.<sup>1</sup>
- However, during their OPA interviews, multiple SPD members, a KCSO Deputy, and a Washington State Patrol Trooper all spoke to ambiguities in written testing standards and procedures. Separately, OPA observed ambiguities in the same standards and procedure. These included:
  - The appropriate placement and handling of explosive "hides" during testing;
  - Specified roles and limitations during testing for evaluators versus handlers;
  - Standards for test time constraints, tests conducted over multiple days, and limitations on reevaluating canines;
  - The use or limitations of informal "mock tests" or "pretests"; and
  - Prior working relationships or potential conflicts between evaluators, observers, and handlers.
- OPA reviewed regulations from several canine certification associations.
  - The Pacific Northwest Police Detection Dog Association outlines double-blind and single-blind search areas, but these concepts are only applied to canines and not the evaluators, observers, or handlers.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See WAC 139-05-915; [Canine Certification Requirements](#), Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission Policy Manual, Ch. 6, Pol. 1 (2020). See also [Canine Certification](#) and [Scoresheet Packet Explosive Canine Team](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Certification and Training](#), Pacific Northwest Police Detection Dog Association (2024).



- The National Police Canine Association explains testing procedures at a high level but does not detail the appropriate handling of scents or potential conflicts between handlers and evaluators.<sup>3</sup>
- The United States Police Canine Association's certification process outlines procedures related to scent detection and allows portions of the test to be run again until the canine passes, but it neither limits the number of retests nor provides guidance on potential conflicts between evaluators, observers, and handlers.<sup>4</sup>

### **Recommendations**

- SPD should collaborate with CJTC and other agencies to review the written standards for the certification of canines in explosive detection. Revised standards should more clearly articulate formal testing and retesting conditions, procedures, as well as expectations for handlers, observers, and evaluators.
- SPD should consider expanding any such collaboration to include reviewing the written standards for testing all canine disciplines.

I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bonnie Glenn".

Bonnie Glenn  
Interim Director, Office of Police Accountability

---

<sup>3</sup> [\*Scent Detection Certifications\*](#), National Police Canine Association Membership Book (2024-2025).

<sup>4</sup> [\*Governing Rules and Regulations for Certification: Operational Narcotics Testing/ORT Testing\*](#) and [\*USPCA Chief Judge Responsibilities\*](#), United States Police Canine Association (2025).