



For Immediate Release 4/1/2021

CONTACT: Jenna Franklin, Community Engagement Manager OLEO
206-263-3789 | Jenna.Franklin@kingcounty.gov

Terminated KCSO deputy's misconduct investigation raises concerns, OLEO systemic review underway

Today, the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) announced in a press release that it was terminating an employee that was involved in an officer-involved shooting in November 2019.

OLEO supports the decision of the Sheriff to sustain the findings documented in a [termination letter](#), which noted the actions and decisions of the detective were a violation of performance standards. In the letter, Sheriff Mitzi Johanknecht also referred to the employee's disciplinary history dated back to 2014 and 2003, saying it "demonstrates extremely poor judgement." The Sheriff wrote, "this discipline is based on the seriousness of the misconduct, the employee's complaint history and the likelihood that the employee will repeat these actions."

The King County Office of Law Enforcement Oversight (OLEO) closely monitored the Sheriff's Office internal investigation, including attending the interviews of the accused employee and force review board. OLEO identified several areas of significant concern regarding the decision-making and tactics of the accused, including taking action when no immediate harm existed causing the series of events that led to the shooting. Like a prior shooting, this incident involved plain clothes officers taking enforcement action, which jeopardizes the safety of persons being apprehended and officers and is a practice that should not be used unless there is an imminent threat of serious bodily harm.

OLEO brought their concerns to the Sheriff's Office attention with the goal of helping ensure transparency and accountability through robust investigation of the incident. Like [other reviews](#) of the Sheriff's Office officer-involved shootings, OLEO is in the process of conducting a systemic review – expected later this year -- to determine opportunities for improvement that can address issues at their root and to strengthen KCSO's policies and practices to reduce the likelihood of incidents like this from occurring in the future.

A central goal of OLEO's [mandate](#) is to independently assess how the KCSO can deliver police services that build, rather than erode, public trust. The KCSO's [General Orders Manual](#) sets expectations and guidelines for performance that guide all uniformed personnel. OLEO's systemic review and policy recommendations consider the value changes put forth offer the public, KCSO personnel, and how they impact public safety.