



DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDATION

TO: Chief Lisa Davis, Austin Police Department
FROM: Director Gail McCant, Office of Police Oversight
DATE: August 5, 2025
SUBJECT: 2025-0093 Discipline Recommendation

Dear Chief Davis:

On February 6, 2025, the Office of Police Oversight (OPO) received an external complaint, 2025-0093, alleging that Austin Police Department (APD) Police Officer Benjamin Cochran, AP5900, has shown APD body-worn camera (BWC) video to the Complainant and other civilians; used excessive force and/or engaged in unprofessional conduct when interacting with individuals in the BWC video; directed unprofessional conduct toward marginalized community members; refused to return property belonging to the Complainant, valued at approximately \$5,000; may have conspired to have the Complainant physically assaulted in Buda, TX; and is engaged in illegal prostitution activities.

Disposition by APD Chain of Command

Upon review of the Notice of Sustained Allegations (NOSA), the Office of Police Oversight concurs with the sustained findings for the following APD General Orders related to the investigation.

- 116.4.7 – Body Worn Camera Video
- 303.6 – Review of all Camera System Recordings
- 303.7.1 – Copies of BWC System Recording
- 900.1.1 - Responsibility to Know and Comply

OPO Discipline Recommendation:

Following the conclusion of our independent administrative review, and in accordance with the Office of Police Oversight's mandate under City Ordinance Chapter 2-15, I am formally recommending the indefinite suspension of Officer Cochran, badge #AP5900, based on sustained policy violations and the officer's own acknowledgment of misconduct.

Evidence in the IAD investigative file confirms that Officer Cochran shared BWC content in a manner that violates APD General Orders. Officer Cochran acknowledged during his IAD interview that he has shared work-related BWC footage with non-law enforcement individuals, and for non-police-related reasons, on multiple occasions since 2012. This behavior is inconsistent with the expectations of public trust and accountability entrusted to members of the Austin Police Department.



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Officer Cochran stated he did not believe he violated General Order 900.1.1, Responsibility to Know and Comply, nor did he believe he violated the Texas Occupations Code §1701.659. However, there is no ambiguity regarding either of these policies. GO 900.1.1 clearly states that employees are required to know and comply with all Department policies, procedures, and written directives. Specifically, sections (a), (b), and (c) of GO 900.1.1 state the following:

- (a) Employees will maintain a working knowledge and comply with the laws, ordinances, statutes, regulations, and APD written directives which pertain to their assigned duties.
- (b) Employees who do not understand their assigned duties or responsibilities will read the relevant directives and guidelines and will consult their immediate supervisor for clarification and explanation.
- (c) A lack of knowledge of an APD written directive is not a defense to disciplinary action.

The Texas Occupations Code §1701.659 is also clear that a peace officer of a law enforcement agency commits an offense if the officer releases a recording created with a body-worn camera without the permission of the applicable law enforcement agency, which is considered a Class A misdemeanor.

These violations are serious, and Officer Cochran's actions breached department policy and state law, eroding public trust and undermining the integrity of accountability systems. For these reasons, I recommend the indefinite suspension of Officer Cochran.

There is insufficient evidence that Officer Cochran was involved in the assault committed against the Complainant, or that he intentionally engaged in discriminatory policing or prostitution.

Sincerely,

Gail McCant
Director
Office of Police Oversight