



ICMS: 2019-1190

Date of Complaint: 10/30/2019

Complaint:

Per an anonymous complaint received by the Office of Police Oversight (OPO) on October 30, 2019, Assistant Chief Newsom informed Chief of Police Brian Manley that text messages exist in which Assistant Chief Newsom using racist language to describe African Americans. According to the complaint, the entire executive floor (including both sworn and civilian employees) was allegedly aware of this conversation between Chief Manley and Assistant Chief Newsom. Furthermore, all Assistant Chiefs were allegedly made aware of Assistant Chief Newsom's use of racist language. All of the Assistant Chiefs and other sworn employees on the executive floor may have violated Austin Police Department (APD) policy when, after being made aware of Assistant Chief Newsom's behavior, allegedly failed to report it so that it could be investigated.

The OPO recommends an independent investigation into the allegations listed in this Notice of Formal Complaint against all Assistant Chiefs and other sworn employees who were employed on the executive floor during the relevant time period.

Additional Information: The anonymous complaint received by the OPO is quoted below:

“I have been advised allegedly that AC Newsom, on a continuous [*sic*] basis for at least the last decade, has used the word “nigger” to describe African Americans. I have been advised that AC Newsom, went to Chief Manley explaining that someone may have possession of text exchanges where he was using “nigger” in the conversation. Chief Manley asked if it was possible that someone did in fact have screenshots of these conversations and AC Newsome [*sic*] said yes. Allegedly everyone on the executive floor (to include officers, Assistant Chiefs, Chief of Staff and administrative staff) knew about this conversation between Chief Manley and AC Newsom. All Assistant Chiefs were made aware of AC Newsom using the extremely derogatory term “nigger” and failed to report it for investigation or review. •Specifically while advising President Obama landed in Austin AC Newsom stated “Negro one down”. •When describing Council woman Ora Houston AC Newsom stated “She is a dumb nigger but a nice lady” •When talking about Chief Dixon AC Newsom stated “Frank is a nigger but he is our nigger” •When on a Special Response Team deployment AC Newsom called Officer LaMarcus Wells and Officer Kheston Campbell “Stupid fucking niggers”. This was in front of other SRT personnel and SRT supervisors. It has also been alleged that AC Newsom was involved in a family violence altercation with [REDACTED], a current city employee. On one occurrence [*sic*] a Park Ranger had to step in to deal with the altercation. I ask that all of these allegations be investigated.”



Administrative Policies to Review:

301.2 Impartial Attitude and Courtesy

Employees are expected to act professionally, treat all persons fairly and equally, and perform all duties impartially, objectively, and equitably without regard to personal feelings, animosities, friendships, financial status, sex, creed, color, race, religion, age, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression or social or ethnic background.

- (a) Employees will not express or otherwise manifest any prejudice concerning race, religion, national origin, age, political affiliation, sex, or other personal characteristics in the performance of their duties.
 1. Employees will respect the rights of individuals and will not engage in discrimination, oppression, or favoritism whether by language, act, or omission.
 2. The use of racial or ethnic remarks, slurs, epithets, words or gestures, which are derogatory or inflammatory in nature to or about any person or group of persons is strictly prohibited.

328.2 Racial or Bias-Based Profiling Policy

The Department strives to provide law enforcement services to our diverse community while respecting the racial, cultural, or other differences of those we serve. It is the policy and practice of the Department to provide law enforcement services and to enforce the law equally, fairly, and without discrimination toward any individual or group.

Race, ethnicity or nationality, religion, sex, sexual orientation, economic status, age, cultural group, disability, or affiliation with any other similar identifiable group shall not be used as the basis for providing differing levels of law enforcement services or the enforcement of the law.

While the practice of racial or bias-based profiling is strictly prohibited, it is recognized that race or cultural differences may be legitimately considered by an officer in combination with other legitimate factors; to establish reasonable suspicion or probable cause (e.g., subject description is limited to a specific race or group), to establish relevant elements of a crime (e.g. exploitation of an elderly or disabled individual), or to gather evidence relevant to enhanced punishment due to offenses committed because of bias or prejudice.

328.3 Member Responsibilities

Every member of this Department shall perform his/her duties in a fair and objective manner and is responsible for promptly reporting any known instances of racial or bias-based profiling to a supervisor.

900.3.2 Acts Bringing Discredit Upon the Department

Since the conduct of personnel both on-duty or off-duty may reflect directly upon the Department, employees must conduct themselves at all times in a manner which does not bring reproach, discredit, or embarrassment to the Department or to the City.



- (a) Employees will not commit any act which tends to destroy public confidence in, and respect for, the Department or which is prejudicial to the good order, efficiency, or discipline of the Department.

900.4.3 Neglect of Duty

Employees will satisfactorily perform their duties. Examples of unsatisfactory performance include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Lack of knowledge of the application of laws required to be enforced.
- (b) Unwillingness or inability to perform assigned tasks.
- (c) Failure to take appropriate action on the occasion of a crime, disorder, investigation or other condition deserving police attention.
- (d) Failure to respond to any call or to perform any police duties assigned to them by appropriate authorities.
- (e) Absence without approved leave.
- (f) Repeated poor evaluations.
- (g) Written record of repeated infractions of rules, regulations, directives or orders of the Department.
- (h) Failure to follow department standardized training and tactics when it was objectively reasonable to do so.
- (i) Employees are expected to be truthful at all times in the performance of their duties, However, there may be instances where, initially, the employee has not been truthful; but, before the investigation is complete, the employee provides an accurate and detailed accounting of their true culpability in a situation, and accepts full responsibility for their actions. In those cases, the Chief may consider each case on a fact-specific basis.

900.5.1 Supporting Fellow Employees

- (a) Employees will not knowingly aid, abet, or assist another Department member in violating any Department directive or order.

914.3.1 Discrimination

- (a) Discrimination is any act or omission of an act which would create a hostile work environment, or exclude any person from employment or promotional opportunities because of creed, color, national origin, sex, gender identity or gender expression, age, religion, veteran status, disability, or sexual orientation.
- (c) Discrimination includes, but is not limited to, derogatory comments, slurs or jokes, pictures, cartoons or posters and actions that result in an employee being offended or insulted.

914.4 Responsibilities

This order applies to all Department personnel. All employees shall follow the intent of these guidelines in a manner that reflects Department orders, professional law enforcement standards and the best interest of the Department and its mission.

- (a) All employees shall promptly report any observed or known violations of this order to:



1. Any person in the employee's chain-of-command, including the Chief. If the allegation involves a person in the employee's chain-of-command, employees should feel free to report the situation to any other supervisor.
2. Internal Affairs (for sworn employees).
4. City Auditor's Office.
5. The Director of City-HR or Civil Service.

914.5 Investigation of Complaints

- (b) All complaints of discrimination/harassment involving sworn employees shall be reported to the Chief.

900.1.1 Responsibility to Know and Comply

The rules of conduct set forth in this order do not serve as an all-inclusive list of requirements, limitations, or prohibitions on employee conduct and activities; employees are required to know and comply with all Department policies, procedures, and written directives.

- (a) Employees will maintain a working knowledge and comply with the laws, ordinances, statutes, regulations, and APD 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.

Recommended Classification:

The OPO is not recommending a classification as it is not applicable to Austin Police Department executive staff.