



OFFICE OF POLICE OVERSIGHT

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March 19, 2024

Robin Henderson, Interim Chief of Police
Austin Police Department
715 E. 8th Street
Austin, TX 78701

RE: OPO Response to APD's January 2024 Approved Changes to the General Orders
under 214.6.2 Tire Deflation Device

Dear Chief Henderson:

On January 11, 2024, the Office of Police Oversight (OPO) received notification of approved changes to the Austin Police Department (APD) General Orders policies. OPO has reviewed the approved changes, and attached to this memorandum, you will find OPO feedback and recommendations.

The specific policies reviewed in this memorandum are as follows:

- 214.6.2 Tire Deflation Device (TDD)
- 214.6.2 (c) Pre-Pursuit TDD Deployment

We look forward to addressing the items identified and improving these policies to benefit the community and APD's sworn personnel.

Sincerely,

Gail McCant, Director
Office of Police Oversight



214.6.2 Tire Deflation Device

Recommendation #1:

OPO recommends that APD omit language that appears to narrow the scope inadvertently.

1. ~~If the pursued vehicle is, for example, transporting hazardous materials, or a school bus is transporting children,~~ Officers and supervisors ~~should~~ shall weigh the potential risks and consequences against the need to immediately stop the vehicle. ~~immediately.~~

Recommendation #2:

OPO recommends that APD address the safety of the officer deploying the TDD in policy.

Officers deploying the TDD are susceptible to various dangers, including death, by fleeing vehicles, the general public, and other pursuit vehicles. OPO recommends that APD add language to this policy that addresses the safety measures and tactics to be considered by and for the officer who is to deploy the TDD.

Recommendation #3:

OPO recommends that APD rewrite 214.6.2 (c) Pre-Pursuit TDD Deployment for clarity.

Subsection (c) was a new edition to this policy and aimed to address pre-pursuit TDD Deployment. OPO's analysis indicates that this subsection should be rewritten to reflect the same clarity and conciseness as subsection (d). Subsection (d) was also a new addition to this policy and succinctly addressed TDD Deployment at Fixed Positions.