CITY OF LONG BEACH

Memorandum

Date: January 5, 2026

To: Francine Kerridge, Director, Office of Police Oversight

From: Wally Hebeish, Chief of Police

For: Police Oversight Commission

Subject: **POLICE DEPARTMENT RESPONSE TO OPO RECOMMENDATIONS**

On behalf of the Long Beach Police Department, I am pleased to present the following response memorandum related to the October 15, 2025, Office of Police Oversight (OPO) Complaint Investigation Review recommendations.

Over the past several years, the Long Beach Police Department has worked diligently to ensure an efficient and effective internal affairs process that aligns with best practices in law enforcement and allows the department to make necessary adjustments and improvements to its Professional Standards Division. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the OPO Director, Francine Kerridge, and the OPO staff for their ongoing partnership and commitment to productive collaboration. The Long Beach Police Department works to provide the highest level of service to our community, and we look forward to ongoing collaboration in support of this goal.

AREAS OF CONTEXT AND CLARIFICATION

Allegations versus Policy Violations

The OPO report states there were "799 violations" reviewed and that 52% of allegations of misconduct resulted in a sustained allegation. The Department would like to clarify our analysis of the OPO data (which can be found on page 3 of the OPO Complaint Review report). In 2024, the department recorded 234 investigations completed, with 35 cases having one or more sustained allegations (15% of cases). This is likely due to the differing methods of review, as one complaint can often include multiple policy violations.

The department currently follows California Department of Justice (DOJ) reporting standards for published complaint data, which can be found in the LBPD Year in Review and Accountability Report, publicly available here. The Department will consult with the OPO to clarify the review of violations versus complaints in order provide additional clarification and maintain consistency in determining whether reporting guidelines warrant reconsideration.

OPO RECOMMENDATION & DEPARTMENT RESPONSE

Recommendation #1: The OPO has noted instances during its case reviews where, in response to complex assault or domestic violence calls, officers were faced with conflicting accounts from involved parties. In some of these cases, it appeared that additional investigative steps could have helped clarify the circumstances and better determine culpability before making an

arrest decision. Encouraging officers to take the time to assess available evidence and statements thoroughly in these situations could help ensure that the most accurate determinations are made in the field and reinforce community trust in the investigative process.

Response: The Department **agrees in principle** with this recommendation. Within the state's Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training Learning Domain 25 on Domestic Violence, the state provides police departments with the following guidance: There are times when both parties are equally assaultive and batter one another. At other times, even after a careful and thorough investigation, it is impossible to identify the dominant aggressor. In domestic violence situations such instances should be rare. In such rare cases it may be appropriate to arrest both, as long as self-defense has been ruled out and there is probable cause to believe each party has committed an offense. A review of the Department's domestic violence incidents reveals that 3% of incidents resulted in both individuals being arrested.

Implementation Plan: The Department identified areas where training could have improved the outcome of certain incidents. In addition, the Department provides its personnel biannual training on Domestic Violence including how to handle the rare situations where arresting both parties is proper. This is also covered for all new officers in the academy. Therefore, while the Department is in alignment and operates under state guidelines, LBPD will evaluate an In-Service Training Bulletin to further reinforce training related to domestic violence incidents.

Recommendation #2: The OPO recommends the LBPD set clear guidance on how long officers should remain on a call after safety is under control and the officer has no responsibilities as a part of the investigation. Supervisors should encourage officers to clear from incidents when their presence is no longer required so that other calls for service can be handled. This will help ensure that resources are used efficiently, officers are available when and where they are most needed, and the community receives timely service.

Response: **Further Review and Project Tracking**. The LBPD is committed to the efficient use of patrol resources to ensure timely responses to calls for service and emergencies. While we understand there is a perception which might exist with an abundance of officers on a call, it is important to also note that situations exists in which multiple patrol officers are needed for a variety of reasons, including officer and community safety based on prior situations or concerns, improved law enforcement situational awareness, increased training opportunities for efforts to increase staffing levels based on the success of recruit officers working with Field Training Officers, as well as public requests for increased visibility and enhancing safety.

Existing policy (7.1.9.3 Situations Requiring Field Sergeant Notification) mandates that a sergeant is notified anytime three or more units respond to a call for service. In three cases reviewed, the policy was adhered to, sergeants responded to the scene, and officers left in a reasonable amount of time. This policy ensures sergeants are aware of any call for service that may cause an undue burden on patrol resources and can ensure officers are not on a call unnecessarily. Each call for service is unique with circumstances that may require more or less resources to safely conclude the incident for the community member and the officer.

Implementation Plan: The department will review our current practices to determine whether a policy revision and/or supervisory training is warranted. The department will also meet with OPO to review the specific instances in which BWC was reviewed in order to assess whether any contributing factors exist in sample group, or if opportunities for improvement are identified. This review will occur during the first quarter of 2026.

Recommendation #3: The OPO recommends the LBPD requires inmates held in their detention facility to have a responsibility within the space where they are held. This could include making their bed in the morning, a verbal acknowledgement at every count during waking hours (daylight to lights out), etc. This would allow jail staff to better assess the health of inmates that may appear to be sleeping but may actually be in medical distress.

Response: The Department **agrees** with this recommendation. In 2023, after reviewing LBPD jail practices, the department strengthened standard operating procedures in the jail. Detention officers shall check inmates for signs of life and if proof of life is not clear, the inmate shall be awakened by voice command or noise.

In addition, the department will issue a project in January of 2026 to review the feasibility of the OPO inmate recommendations to ensure we remain in compliance with Board of State and Community Corrections requirements, as well as best practices within the regional custody environment. Project implementation will be 45 days from memorandum submission.

Implementation Plan: Completed.

Recommendation #4: The OPO recommends the LBPD immediately collect and store all video footage, BWC footage (and all other potential evidence that may be lost with the passing of time) at the outset of an investigation of a critical incident occurring in the jail.

Response: There is **no change needed**. The Department is not aware of video being unavailable and has requested clarity from OPO. The department follows California Government Code Section 34090.06k, which governs the preservation and destruction of law enforcement records, including video footage. Department BWC footage is retained for one year under this legal requirement.

Recommendation #5: The OPO recommends the LBPD utilize experienced counsel that is well-versed in the nuances of the Peace Officer Bill of Rights (POBR) prior to placing a complaint investigation into suspense (tolling). The OPO has noticed tolling practices that do not appear to comply with the law.

Response: The Department **agrees in principle** with this recommendation. The Department takes the Peace Officer Bill of Rights seriously and makes every effort to bring each Internal Affairs case to closure in a timely fashion. To that end, the Department has maintained dedicated legal counsel from the City Attorney's office for over a decade. The attorney is consulted on POBR issues, including legal guidance related to cases held in abeyance and associated criteria. The Department also adheres to Government Code Section 3304 which outlines the tolling guidelines.

Implementation Plan: After further consideration, this recommendation will not be implemented. The department will continue seeking legal guidance from the City Attorney on holding administrative cases in abeyance based on "tolling" exceptions.

Recommendation #6: When cited case law is applied too broadly or incorrectly, it can result in actions that may be unduly intrusive and/or potentially illegal. The OPO recommends the Department survey officers to determine what case laws are being routinely relied upon to support decision-making and in what contexts and that it ensures officers are provided with sufficient guidance and training on the proper application of such legal standards.

Response: The Department **agrees in principle** with this recommendation.

Implementation Plan: The department has previously implemented practices consistent with the OPO recommendations and will continue to evaluate our processes as part of our regularly held strategic planning meeting each year.

In many of the cases reviewed by the OPO, the concerns were found to have been addressed as part of the LBPD Internal Affairs process through dispositions which included re-training for the involved officers. As a modern and learning organization, the department has a variety of practices to ensure case law awareness and application is communicated to all department personnel. Throughout each year, staff are provided with scheduled and mandated regular training such as advanced officer training, management training, bi-annual supervisor training, and many other mandated annual trainings which include legislative updates. In addition, the department reviews emergent case law with the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs Association, the Long Beach City Attorney and the LBPD Training Division to determine whether any new or revised legal information needs to be disseminated to officers and department staff. In addition, the Department issues an annual Legal Bulletin disclosing all new laws impacting Department employees. The department will also review each case in which OPO has assessed a broad application of case law. This will take place during regularly scheduled OPO/Professional Standards Division meetings.

Recommendation #7: The OPO recommends the LBPD create an Internal Affairs manual to guide investigative practices, set standards for investigation steps and requirements, as well as to serve as a resource for newly assigned staff. The creation of an Internal Affairs manual would provide consistent, fair, and transparent investigation requirements. The manual also lets the public and officer know what to expect during an administrative investigation.
Response: The Department **agrees** with this recommendation.

Implementation Plan: Expected implementation to take place in second quarter of 2026. The department previously maintained an Internal Affairs (IA) Standard Operating Manual which was discontinued sometime prior to 2015. The necessary IA content was integrated into the official LBPD Department Manual, but in 2023 the Chief of Police directed staff to examine reestablishing Standard Operating Procedures to include a clear authorization path which would maintain consistency with LBPD policies and practice.

Recommendation #8: The OPO recommends the LBPD Internal Affairs investigators inform complainants that their conversation with the investigator is audio recorded at the start of the interview. Although the law does not require consent to record investigative interviews, as there is no expectation of privacy, notification would only add a layer of transparency and community awareness.

Response: The Department **agrees** with this recommendation.

Implementation Plan: Internal Affairs Section will implement this recommendation within 30-45 days of submission of this memorandum.

Recommendation #9: The OPO recommends that policy violations tentatively identified during a complaint investigation only be applied to officers whose conduct was relevant to the complaint. Assigning blanket violations to non-involved officers can create confusion about accountability, reduce clarity in investigative findings, and potentially diminish the fairness of outcomes. By ensuring that violations are applied with precision and tied directly to individual actions, the Department can maintain both fairness for officers and credibility in the eyes of the community. This approach strengthens accountability while also upholding the principle that responsibility should be clearly and appropriately assigned. Often, a preliminary review of BWC footage can resolve questions regarding involvement. The POBR allows additional officers as well as allegations to be added at a later date, if necessary, and the investigation completion date is based on the date of discovery.

Response: No further action. The Department has reviewed this recommendation and after further consideration, will not implement this recommendation as presented. A core value of the Long Beach Police Department is accountability, and this must apply to the actions of all of our employees, whether or not relevant to the complaint in a question or discovered during a subsequent administrative review. This process serves to support our foundation of public trust. LBPD Internal Affairs is responsible for fact finding, gathering, and presenting the information of the investigation to the Chief of Police who maintains the responsibility and authority to make a determination of case disposition. Additionally, if body-worn camera footage clearly disproves an allegation against an accused officer, the officer is not interviewed for the case.

Recommendation #10: The OPO recommends the LBPD adds the definition of the disposition to the closing letters it provides to the complainants. Terms such as "sustained," "unfounded," or "exonerated" may not be familiar to community members, and without definitions, complainants could be uncertain of the outcome of their case. By providing straightforward explanations of each disposition, the Department can make closing letters more meaningful, ensuring that outcomes are understood.

Response: The Department **agrees** with this recommendation.

Implementation Plan: The department expects implementation of this recommendation to take place within 60 days of this memorandums submission.

Recommendation #11: The OPO recommends IA to make it a standing practice to contact all complainants by phone to acknowledge the receipt of their complaint. Early communication helps ensure that complainants feel acknowledged and provides an opportunity to clarify details, confirm accuracy, and address any initial questions about the process. A proactive call also demonstrates the LBPD's commitment to accountability and prioritizing community concerns.

Response: The Department **agrees** with this recommendation.

Implementation Plan: No further action. The Internal Affairs Section has already implemented a pilot program which includes a new process whereby investigators attempt to contact complainants by phone to acknowledge their complaint. We will evaluate the pilot program at the conclusion of 2026 and determine whether or not pertinent data exists for inclusion in the LBPD Year in Review and Accountability report (YIRA).

Recommendation #12: For complaints alleging use of force, the OPO recommends a HIPAA release is requested at the outset of the complaint intake. Access to relevant medical information is often critical to fully understanding the nature and extent of any injuries, as well as the overall impact of the incident. Obtaining this information early allows for more complete investigations, ensures accuracy in findings, and demonstrates the Department's commitment to conducting fair and thorough reviews of force-related complaints.

Response: There is **no change** needed. The Internal Affairs Section already obtains HIPAA releases for use of force complaints.

Implementation Plan: None.

If you have any questions, please contact me or my Chief of Staff, Norma Carrillo, at (562) 570-7301.

cc: Mayor and Councilmembers
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