

**PUBLIC RELEASE**



*LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS SECTION*

**Supervisory Inquiry 2020-00018**

**Date/Time of Incident:** 02/11/20  
**Date/Time Reported:** 02/11/20  
**Reported to:** Sergeant Michael Rairdon Ofc# 88009  
**Associated Case Report #:** 20-1272  
**Location of Incident:** 7860 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Wellington, Colorado  
**Involved Employee(s):** Deputy Geoff Preece Ofc# 18051

**Case Origin**

I was assigned this case by Sergeant Matt Cherry from Professional Standards. The incident addresses policy violations by Deputy Preece involving controlled substances located in the prisoner compartment of Deputy Preece's patrol vehicle.

**Complaint(s)/Allegation(s)**

That Deputy Preece violated rule 40500: Assigned Vehicle and Vehicle Use, Section 8 - OFF DUTY VEHICLE USE, by leaving the window of his prisoner compartment open while his vehicle is unattended in a public place.

That Deputy Preece violated Policy 61305: Custody and Transport of Arrestees, Section 2 – VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS, by failing to locate a baggie containing controlled substances which appeared to come from under the front passenger seat into the prisoner compartment.

**Documentation Review**

CAD Incident 200420396 – Original Incident involving custody of the male on a narcotics investigation at the hotel.

CAD Incident 200420483 – Incident involving the found substance, units associated, and the vehicle tow.

Case Report 20-1270 – Documents the original incident and narcotics investigation.

Case Report 20-1272 – Documents the found substance and disposition.

Policy 40500: Assigned Vehicle and Vehicle Use, Section 8 – Off Duty Vehicle Use

*“6. Unattended vehicles are to be locked and secure at all times. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary that the vehicle be left running (e.g., continued activation of emergency lights, canine environmental safety, and charging).”*



*LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE*  
*PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS SECTION*

**Supervisory Inquiry 2020-00018**

Policy 61305: Custody and Transport of Arrestees, Section 2 – Vehicle Requirements  
*“Vehicles are searched for weapons or contraband and doors checked for proper working condition at the beginning of each shift and searched after transporting each arrestee.”*

**Interviews**

**Interview with Deputy [REDACTED]:**

On 04/14/20, I spoke with Deputy [REDACTED], who recalled the incident. She told me that she had been working with Deputy Preece on 02/11/20 when they had taken a male into custody at the Days Inn at 7860 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Wellington. She said they opened the rear passenger door to the prisoner compartment and began to place the male arrestee inside, when she saw a section of a torn plastic bag protruding from under the prisoner barrier into the front compartment and white powder on the floor of the prisoner compartment. Deputy [REDACTED] said the arrestee hesitated before he stepped into the compartment, and that Deputy Preece, as soon as he realized what was on the floorboard, removed the male and closed the car door. She said the male was transferred to another vehicle and a supervisor was notified.

Deputy [REDACTED] told me she had discussed the powder with Deputy Preece, who told her he didn't know where it came from, and that it clearly wasn't from the male they had just arrested, but that it had apparently been there previously. He said that it seemed to have come from underneath the front passenger seat, slid under the prisoner barrier, partway into the prisoner compartment. She said that Deputy Preece had told her it may have occurred when he had recently been at the barber shop and left the prisoner compartment window partway open, which she said he regularly does, despite the fact she has recommended on numerous occasions that he close windows when unattended, which is according to policy.

**Interview with Corporal [REDACTED]:**

On 04/16/20, I spoke with Corporal [REDACTED] who had been on scene during the incident, but was not directly involved. He said that he was there to assist, but mostly dealt with the fire at the Days Inn, which was a concurrent incident. Corporal [REDACTED] said he helped collect the white substance after it had been field tested presumptive positive for methamphetamine. He said that Deputy Preece told him that he had parked his patrol vehicle outside his barber shop the day before, and said his rear passenger window may have been open at that time, and that he suspected someone may have dropped the baggie in question into his prisoner compartment.



*LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS SECTION*

**Supervisory Inquiry 2020-00018**

**Interview with Deputy Preece:**

On 04/23/20, I spoke with Deputy Geoff Preece about the incident. He confirmed what he had told me on a previous conversation on 03/09/20, when we originally had a conversation about the area in his patrol car where the bag and powder had been located, and that it appeared it had come from underneath the cage kick-panel, where the prisoner compartment meets the floorboard between the front passenger area and the prisoner compartment. He told me he didn't know it had been there previously, but said it looked like it may have found its way into the prisoner compartment from behind the front passenger seat. We discussed ensuring his patrol vehicle windows are fully up when not attended, and to make sure the passenger area gets thoroughly checked periodically, and the prisoner compartment checked consistently.

**Summary**

The investigation into this incident revealed that Deputy Geoff Preece neglected to properly secure the windows of his patrol vehicle when unattended, both on- and off-duty, and that he did not properly search the passenger compartment and prisoner compartment of his patrol vehicle. These two factors resulted in a baggie of methamphetamine being found ruptured between the prisoner and passenger compartments of his patrol vehicle. As a result, Deputies Preece and [REDACTED] had to undergo decontamination by Poudre Fire Authority.

---

---

***Findings Pertaining to the Investigation for Internal Affairs Case #2020-00018***

Complaint: That Deputy Geoff Preece failed to secure his patrol vehicle when unattended.

**Policy 40500: Assigned Vehicle and Vehicle Use, Section 8 – Off Duty Vehicle Use**

*6. Unattended vehicles are to be locked and secure at all times. No key should be left in the vehicle except when it is necessary that the vehicle be left running (e.g., continued activation of emergency lights, canine environmental safety, and charging).*

The complaint on this violation of policy is founded, because Deputy Preece has failed to secure his patrol vehicle by leaving windows partially down when parked and unattended. Therefore, I recommend this violation be found as **Improper Conduct**.

**PUBLIC RELEASE**



*LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE*  
*PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS SECTION*

Supervisory Inquiry 2020-00018

Complaint: That Deputy Geoff Preece failed to properly search the prisoner compartment of his patrol vehicle at the beginning of his duty shift.

**Policy 61305: Custody and Transport of Arrestees, Section 2 – Vehicle Requirements**

*Vehicles may be equipped with security barriers and have the rear doors and windows modified so they cannot be opened from the inside. Vehicles are searched for weapons or contraband and doors checked for proper working condition at the beginning of each shift and searched after transporting each arrestee. Only agency vehicles are used to transport arrestees.*

The complaint on this violation of policy is founded, because Deputy Preece has failed to completely search the passenger and prisoner compartment of his patrol vehicle. Therefore, I recommend this violation be found as **Improper Conduct**.

Respectfully submitted,

Russell Downing, Corporal

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**PUBLIC RELEASE**



*LARIMER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE*  
*PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS SECTION*  
Supervisory Inquiry 2020-00018

- I accept the findings as provided by the investigator
- I do not accept the findings and provide the following comments

John Manago, Undersheriff                      Date

- I accept the findings as provided by the investigator
- I do not accept the findings and provide the following comments

Justin E. Smith, Sheriff                              Date

**Warning:** All records of this type are to be confidential and maintained in the Professional Standards Office only. Upon completion of your investigation, return this original printed form to the Professional Standards Office.. Remove any and all copy(ies) of this investigation from your computer once completed. You must submit this report to the Professional Standards Office through your division administrator.