






# EDGEWATER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Date: February 16, 2021

To: Sergeant Nathan Geerdes

From: Chief John Mackey 

Re: Notice of Disciplinary Action 

On December 28, 2020, an independent investigator was retained by the City to step in and investigate the allegations involved in 

Based on interviews of members of the Edgewater Police Department, and review of the written documentation the independent investigator concluded that he found the following sustained violations of department policies by Sergeant Geerdes. See findings below by Investigator, Mr. Sam Realmuto.

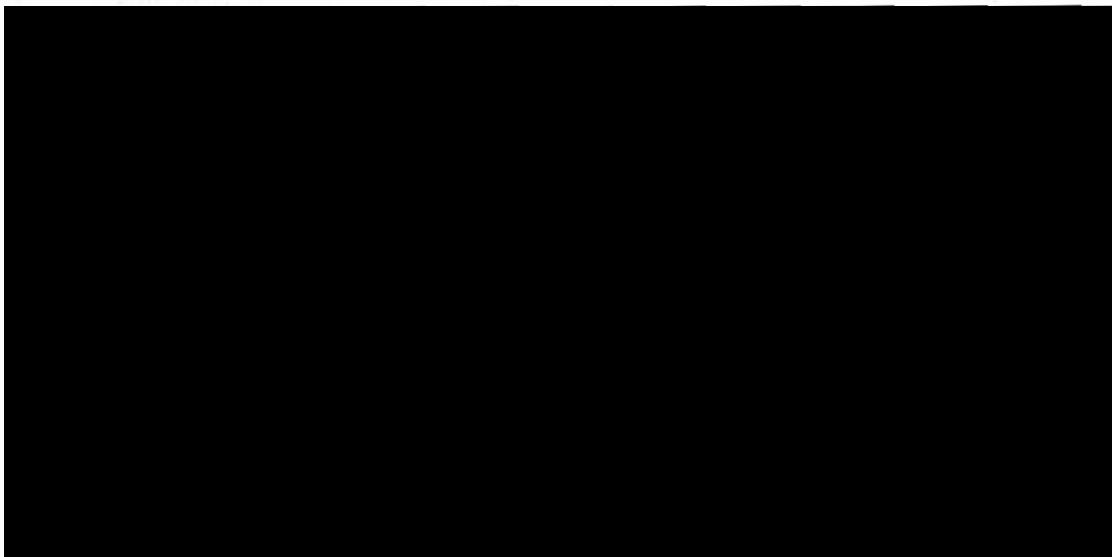
## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS OF POLICY VIOLATIONS:

In my review of the Edgewater Police Department Policy Manual, the following policies are implicated by the allegations brought forward regarding the conduct of Sergeant Geerdes.

### Standards of Conduct:

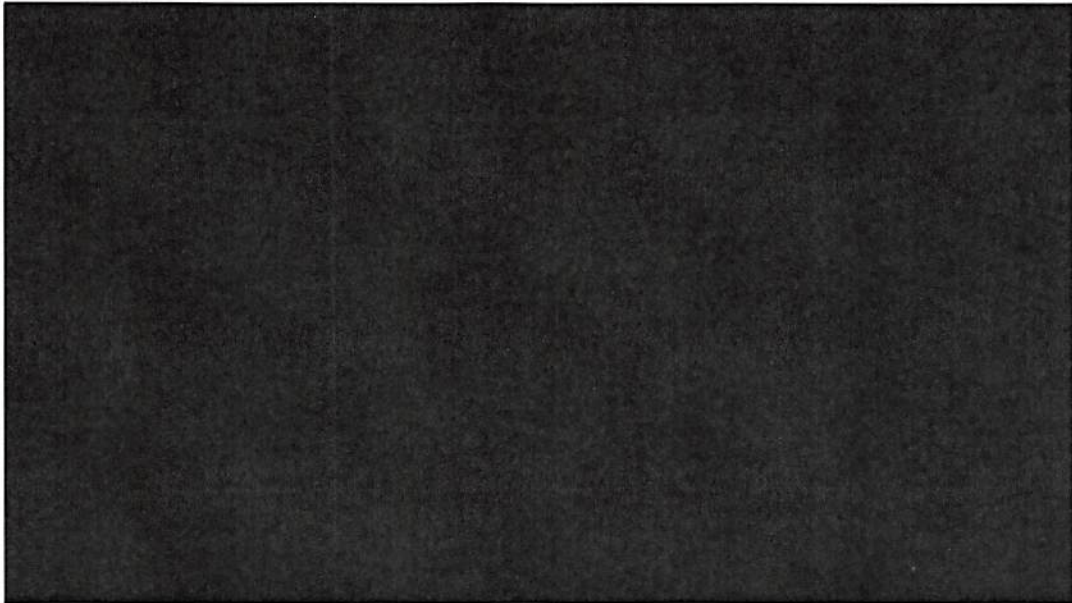
#### 319.6.8 Performance

*(m) Any other on or off duty conduct which any member knows or reasonably should know is unbecoming a member of this department, is contrary to good order, efficiency or morale, or tends to reflect unfavorably upon this department or its members.*



Policy Violation of Section 319.6.8(m) sustained.

319.4.2 Supervisor Responsibilities

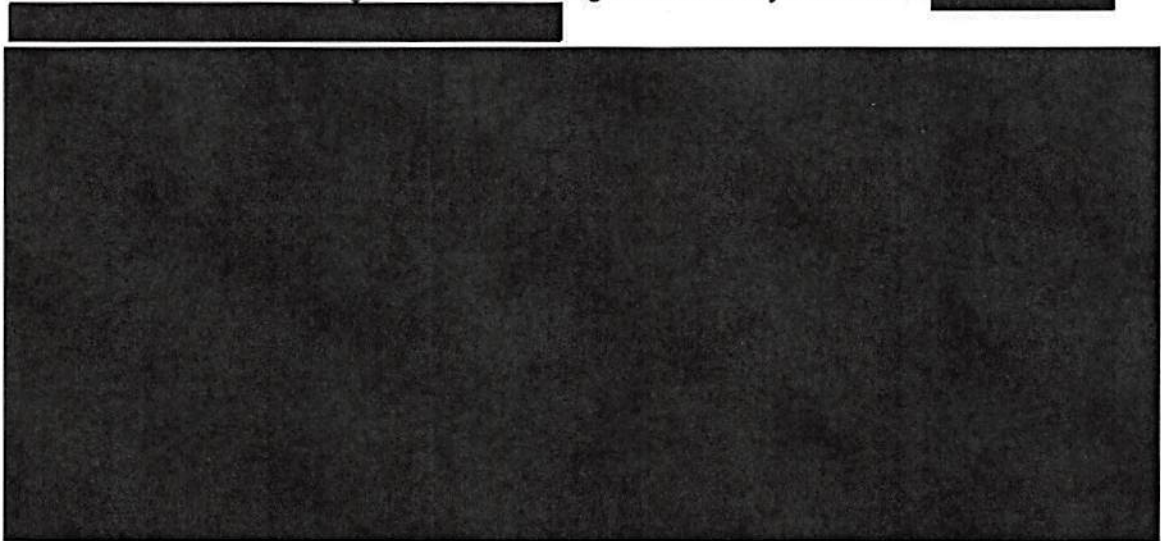


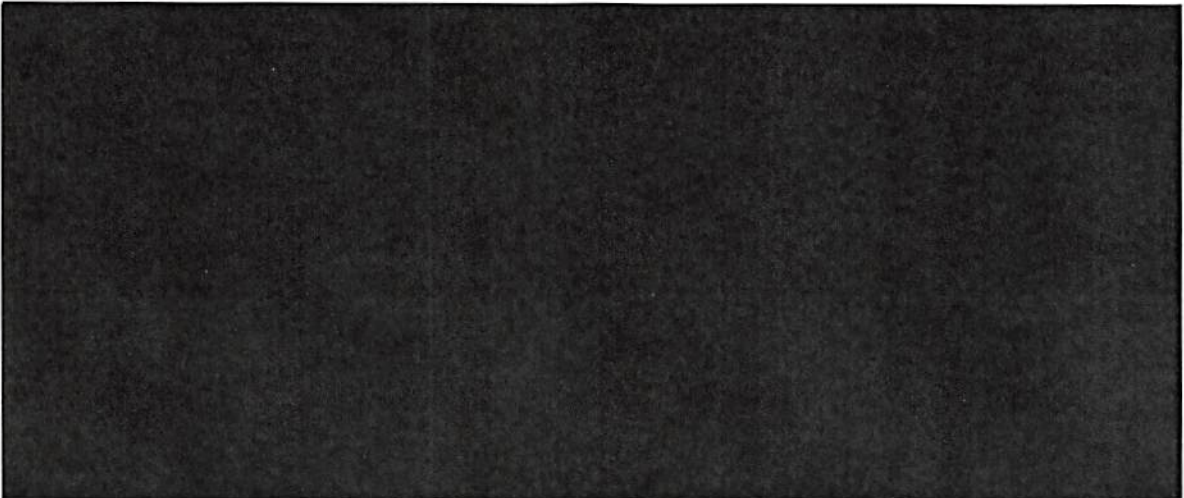
Policy Violation of Section 319.4.2(b) sustained.

**EVIDENCE:**

Interview of Sergeant Geerdes

On January 12, 2021, I met with Sergeant Geerdes at the Edgewater Police Department. Before the start of the interview Sergeant Geerdes was given his Garrity advisement [REDACTED]





**CONCLUSION:**

Sergeant Geerdes.

I believe that Sergeant Geerdes violated two department policies related to conduct.

It is a violation under Section 319.6.8(m) of the department policy for:

*Any other on or off duty conduct which any member knows or reasonably should know is unbecoming a member of this department, is contrary to good order, efficiency or morale, or tends to reflect unfavorably upon this department or its members.*




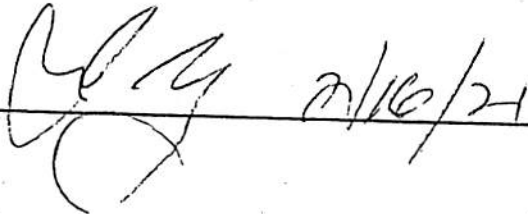
**MY REVIEW:**

The results of the investigation have come directly to me because of your role as Sergeant and [REDACTED]. In accordance with Police Department Policy 1009.10.1, it is my responsibility to determine the amount of any discipline. As such, this memo is intended to advise you that I am contemplating discipline of you associated with the above findings up to and including a multi-day suspension. The basis for the contemplated disciplinary action is your sustained violations of policies 319.4.2(b), and 319.6.8(m) due to your actions and in actions related to events on or about December 19, 2019.

The information set forth above contains the pertinent information I considered associated with this potential discipline. You have the opportunity to respond orally or in writing to me within five

days of receipt of this notice. If you timely submit a response I will consider it prior to rendering my final decision. If you do not, I will make the final decision based upon the information I have.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sgt. Nathan Geerdes

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief John Mackey

NATE GEERDES RESIGNED  
FROM EPD, 2/16/21 PRIOR  
TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHIEF MACKEY



To: McKinzie Rees  
Police Officer

From: Mark Hamilton  
Commander

Date: December 14, 2021

RE: Written Reprimand – Improper use of social media

CC: Nichole Kirkpatrick  
Administrative Services Director

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**This is a written reprimand which will be placed in your personnel file.**

This is a written reprimand that I am issuing, as your supervisor and Department Head, as a result of your actions on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021. An Internal Investigation into your conduct has determined that the following-described behavior constitutes a violation of Edgewater Police Department Policy 342.5 (c) Department Use of Social Media, and therefore appropriate for discipline:



*This is a written warning that if there are any similar violations of Department Policy in the future, you may be subject to further disciplinary action, up to and including termination.*

*In accordance with Handbook Sec. V.A.3.b., you are permitted to provide a written explanation or response to this reprimand for placement in your personnel file. If you wish to do so, I must receive your response in my City email address in-box no later than 5:00 P.M. on May 2, 2019.*

McKinzie Rees  
Employee

12/25/21  
Date

[Signature]  
Department Head

12.25.21  
Date

# Edgewater Police Employee Investigation

## Involved Officer:

McKinzie Rees #19-01

## Witness Officers:

Susan Altman #21-06

Paul Perez #20-01

Brandon Challis #13-01

## Introduction:

On February 15th, 2022, the Lakewood Police Internal Affairs unit was asked to assist in an employee investigation. The involved employee is McKinzie Rees who is currently employed as a police officer for the Edgewater Police Department. Detective Leonard was tasked with contacting Commander Hamilton to gather necessary information to complete the investigation. Detective Leonard obtained all reports related to the initial call as well as an "Formal Inquiry" report completed by Sergeant Challis. Detective Leonard along with Sergeant Bell also conducted interviews with all Edgewater personnel who may have had information related this matter.

## Initial Call:

### **Case #-EW21002760**

On December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, at approximately 10:39 p.m. Officer Rees located at stolen purple Jeep Grand Cherokee bearing Wyoming license plate 2-4050A in the parking lot of the King Soopers, 1725 Sheridan Blvd. Officers Slaven and Plaza assisted as cover. Officer Rees reported that she observed a male and a female inside the vehicle "slumped" over and they appeared to be sleeping. The female was sitting in the driver's seat and was later verbally identified as Brandi Jo Stringer DOB:01/26/1980. The male passenger was identified as Stephen Cooper DOB:11/10/1984. Both parties were eventually detained and transported to the Edgewater Police Department for processing.

While in the booking area at the Edgewater Police Department, Ms. Stringer began to complain that she was feeling sick and wanted to be checked by medical. West Metro Paramedics responded and found that Ms. Stringer had normal vitals and no complaints of pain.

After the booking process was completed, Officer Rees transported Ms. Stringer to the Jefferson County Detention Center. While at the jail, jail staff evaluated Ms. Stringer and it was determined that Officer Rees needed a medical clearance. Officer Rees then transported Ms. Stringer to Lutheran Hospital where she was later released from custody. Officer Rees did not obtain a medical clearance from the hospital or transport Ms. Stringer back to the jail. Officer Rees reported that Ms. Stringer was going to be admitted to the hospital and that she would complete a warrant for Ms. Stringer.

#### **Supervisor Report Review:**

Sergeant Brandon Challis reviewed the report authored by Officer Rees. Sergeant Challis noticed the case/investigation was involving a felony charge and the involved arrestee was released "pending charges." Sgt. Challis was concerned because after reviewing the reports associated to the case, he did not find any fingerprints or buccal swabs submitted in relation to the arrestee, Ms. Stringer. Sgt. Challis spoke to Ofc. Perez about the investigation. Ofc. Perez told Sgt. Challis that he and his recruit Ofc. Altman, responded to Lutheran hospital at the request of Ofc. Rees. Ofc. Perez stated that Ofc. Rees called him and asked that he bring some buccal swabs to the hospital. Ofc. Perez and Ofc. Altman arrived at the hospital and provided the buccal swabs to Ofc. Rees. After obtaining the buccal swabs, Ofc. Perez stated they all left the hospital and went back to the police station patrol room.

Sgt. Challis reviewed the report for a second time and found numerous details in Ofc. Rees' report that needed to be corrected/added. Sgt. Challis sent a list of items that needed to be corrected to Ofc. Rees. After reviewing Ofc. Rees' revised report, he noticed it contradicted her initial report. Sgt. Challis said Ofc. Rees did add more details to her report as he requested, but she also made some changes to it he found concerning. In her original report, Ofc. Rees stated that she did obtain buccal swabs from Ms. Stringer while at the hospital. There was also no mention in her original report that Ms. Stringer was admitted to the hospital. In her final revised report, Ofc. Rees added to her report that she was unable to collect fingerprints or a buccal swab from Ms. Stringer. She also added the hospital staff was going to admit Ms. Stringer due to her medical conditions.

After speaking with his chain of command about the concerns surrounding the case, it was decided that Sgt. Challis would conduct a "Formal Inquiry" into the situation. The Inquiry was completed by Sgt. Challis and was forwarded on to his chain of command. As part of the completed Inquiry, Sgt. Challis also attached dispatch recordings, memorandum statements and related police reports.

### Investigation Management:

Evidence collected from the Edgewater Police Department is attached as part of this investigation. Attached as evidence are audio recordings from dispatch, written statements from involved employees, the completed "Formal Inquiry", and any relevant Niche police reports.

Det. Leonard did speak with an "unidentified" employee at Lutheran Hospital. The employee works in the records department. Det. Leonard could not obtain any medical records related to Ms. Stringer without Ms. Stringer's written consent. Det. Leonard was informed that Ms. Stringer's time at the hospital was considered as an "Emergency Room Visit" and she was released from the hospital at 4:30 a.m. on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021.

Det. Leonard attempted to obtain any available video from the Jefferson County Jail sally port and booking area. Det. Leonard was advised by Jennifer Van Dorn, that video recordings are only available 30 days from the date of incident. Ms. Van Dorn double checked for any available video from the date of this incident. Ms. Van Dorn confirmed there was no video related to Ofc. Rees' arrest.

### Interviews:

*\*\* All interviews were conducted by Detective Leonard and Sergeant Bell at the Lakewood Police Department. Attached to this investigation are audio and video recordings as well as transcriptions of the interviews. The following are summaries of the interviews. Please refer to the attached recordings and transcriptions for full statements. \*\**

#### **Sergeant Brandon Challis #13-01, Supervisor**

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002, at 8:05 a.m., Sgt. Challis met with Det. Leonard and Sgt. Bell in the Lakewood Police Professional Standards conference room.

Sgt. Challis started the interview by explaining to Det. Leonard and Sgt. Bell his involvement in this case. Sgt. Challis stated he reviewed Ofc. Rees' police report and noticed it involved a felony arrest. He noticed in the report that the arrestee was released pending felony charges and there were no buccal swabs or fingerprints obtained from that individual. Sgt. Challis said he spoke with Ofc. Perez who had some knowledge of the case and gave him a "brief breakdown" of what he knew about the case.

Sgt. Challis reviewed Ofc. Rees' report for a second time and stated he sent her a "list of corrections that needed to be made associated with that and questions I should say associated with that case.." Sgt. Challis provided Det. Leonard with a copy of an email he sent to Ofc. Rees which contained the list of corrections needed to be made. The

email was sent on December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and Ofc. Rees replied to the email on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with her response. A copy of the email is attached to this investigation.

Det. Leonard asked Sgt. Challis what concerns he had after reviewing Ofc. Rees' initial report. Sgt. Challis stated, "*...my biggest concern was why we didn't get ah swabs or, or prints from this individual and why we released him, you know to a hospital pending felony charges ah without consulting a supervisor before releasing that individual.*" Det. Leonard clarified with Sgt. Challis that Ofc. Rees did state in her initial report that she did collect a buccal swab. Sgt. Challis said that is what she wrote but that she did not obtain fingerprints from the arrestee.

Sgt. Challis then described to Det. Leonard and Sgt. Bell how it was decided that he would complete a "Formal Inquiry" regarding the case. Sgt. Challis said it was assigned after it was discovered that Ofc. Rees had made corrections to her report that contradicted her original report, the actual decision to release the individual without consulting a supervisor, and the situation surrounding whether or not buccal swabs were obtained.

Det. Leonard asked Sgt. Challis about Edgewater PD's normal practice/procedures when releasing someone pending charges. Sgt. Challis stated, "*So, typically if it's a...if it's ah, ah felony, it'll be reviewed with...it should be reviewed with a supervisor beforehand...ah, there are some misdemeanors and petty offenses that obviously it's more inconsequential at that point in time, concerning the jails aren't even taking most of those charges anyways...but ah, a felony should be run through a supervisor...*" Det. Leonard then asked if Ofc. Rees was under his direct supervision. Sgt. Challis said she was and had been for approximately 4-months. Sgt. Challis stated that Ofc. Rees was working from 8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. and he was working from 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. He confirmed that at the time of this incident, there was no sergeant on duty. Det. Leonard asked Sgt. Challis who Ofc. Rees could have called regarding the release of an individual with pending felony charges. Sgt. Challis said she could have called him as he had let everyone know on "his side of the week" that they could call him with questions. He also said she could have called someone in investigations. Sgt. Challis continued by saying there are on-call detectives and supervisors they can get a hold of at any time.

Det. Leonard asked Sgt. Challis what he learned during his inquiry about Ofc. Rees' time at the jail. Sgt. Challis said that it was his understanding that when she was at the jail, the staff at the jail requested a medical clearance for the arrestee. Sgt. Challis said he was able to obtain dispatch recordings from that night. On the dispatch recordings from the "Data" channel, Sgt. Challis said Ofc. Rees can be heard saying that she was in route to Lutheran hospital with an arrestee and "*...basically I'm (Ofc. Rees) just gonna drop her off at the hospital.*" Sgt. Challis said that typically if someone were getting a medical clearance prior to going to the jail they would go to Lutheran hospital, but if they were coming from the jail, most of the time, they would take them to St. Anthony's hospital. Sgt. Challis pointed out during the interview that in her original report, Ofc. Rees made no mention of the arrestee being admitted to the hospital. Ofc. Rees added the statements that the arrestee was admitted to the hospital in her final version of the report.

Sgt. Challis, as part of his inquiry, stated he called Lutheran hospital to get any information about the arrestee's hospital visit that night. He learned that the arrestee was not admitted and that she was an "emergency room" visit only.

Det. Leonard asked Sgt. Challis if Ofc. Rees had given him any reason about the differing accounts regarding the buccal swabs in her reports. Sgt. Challis said, *"I asked her hey, you know, what's up with these swabs...I see there's swabs in here and I think I may have even ah mentioned it in here...I spoke with her about the swabs, and she basically told me oh, they're for the other individual...ah because there were two individuals detained in this particular incident and so when they had released the other male pending charges from the department, they had done swabs on him as well...so there was one set of swabs still with the case, those are his swabs..."* Sgt. Challis said he was never able to locate the buccal swabs and he heard they were potentially destroyed without permission.

Sgt. Challis did mention in the interview that he was aware that Ofc. Rees did have some issues with the staff at the jail. He stated he had no firsthand knowledge of what the issues stemmed from but he was aware there is an issue. Sgt. Challis did hear from Ofc. Perez that Ofc. Rees was upset with the jail staff for making her go get medical clearance and she may have mentioned to him that she just wasn't going to take people to jail anymore.

Det. Leonard inquired about Ofc. Rees' overall demeanor while under his supervision. Sgt. Challis stated there are some report writing issues that he has her correct now and then and officer safety is not an issue. He said she is *"not known for having the best attitude about the police department...she does have a pretty poor attitude."* When asked to explain in more detail about Ofc. Rees' poor attitude, Sgt. Challis said, *"Ah, I mean she is ah, she sulks around a lot, she throws temper tantrums frequently...um, there are...there's several other inquires that I've gotten sense of this...ah just from mostly from the general public about just her general behavior and how she treats people on the street...there are officers, they don't even want to be around her because of her attitude and just her general demeanor so...and then most of that's come since this and I, and I knew about some of it beforehand...she's kind of a bit of a hot head."*

The interview was closed with a couple of clarifying questions by Det. Leonard and Sgt. Bell. Please refer to the transcript for full interview.

#### **Officer Paul Perez #20-01, Witness**

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Detective Leonard and Sergeant Bell met with Ofc. Perez in the Lakewood Police Professional Standards conference room. The following is a synopsis of the interview.

Ofc. Perez was asked to start the interview by going over his shift that night and any interactions he may have had with Ofc. Rees. Ofc. Perez stated he started his shift at

midnight and at the time had a recruit in training assigned to him. He said while he and his recruit were at the station getting ready for their shift, he noticed there were some officers in booking with a couple of arrestees who he believed to be suspects involving a stolen vehicle. He stated he did not know any of the details regarding that case. He knew that Ofc. Rees had a female arrestee with an amputated arm in the holding cell. Ofc. Perez said Ofc. Rees eventually left the station and transported her arrestee to Jefferson County Jail. After arriving at the jail, Ofc. Perez stated he believed Ofc. Rees was asked to get a medical clearance prior to her arrestee being accepted.

Ofc. Perez said he received a phone call from Ofc. Rees, asking him if he could bring buccal swabs from the station to Lutheran hospital. Ofc. Perez said he believed she called him while she was still enroute to the hospital. Ofc. Perez said Ofc. Rees was upset the jail was making her get a medical clearance and she told him that she was not going to go back to the jail. Ofc. Perez told Det. Leonard she told him, "...she wasn't gonna go back to jail...she was gonna release from the hospital..."

Ofc. Perez said that he and his recruit, Ofc. Altman, arrived at the hospital and contacted Ofc. Rees in the behavioral health area of the hospital. Ofc. Perez said he provided Ofc. Rees with the swabs and she and Ofc. Altman went into the room and took the samples from the arrestee. Ofc. Perez said that he did not actually see the collection, but he could hear Ofc. Rees explaining to Ofc. Altman the process of doing so because Ofc. Altman had never done that before. After the collection process was completed, Ofc. Perez said they "all" left the hospital and returned to the "Patrol Room" at the Edgewater Police station. Prior to the station, Ofc. Perez said the three of them stopped at a 7-11 to get coffee. While at the 7-11, Ofc. Perez said he overheard Ofc. Rees "*bitching*" to Ofc. Altman about how the "*...jail's got it out for her...*" and that "*she's never going back to the jail.*"

Ofc. Perez said they were at in the Patrol Room for "quite a while." At some point, Ofc. Rees made a comment that she did not think the buccal swabs were useful and called them pointless as she did not collect the arrestee's fingerprints. Ofc. Perez said he told Ofc. Rees that she should probably turn them into evidence anyway because it was "*better than nothing.*" Ofc. Perez said he could not say for certain what Ofc. Rees ended up doing with the buccal swabs but assumed that she disposed of them at the police station.

#### **Officer Susan Altman #21-06, Witness**

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Detective Leonard called recruit Officer Susan Altman. The conversation was recorded and is attached to this investigation for review.

Ofc. Altman was able to recall the incident in question. She told Det. Leonard that she remembered responding to Lutheran Hospital after Ofc. Rees requested they bring some buccal swabs for an arrestee. Once at the hospital, Ofc. Altman remembered handing

the swabs to Ofc. Rees. Ofc. Altman said Ofc. Rees then showed her how to collect the sample as she had never done it before. After the samples were collected, Ofc. Altman said Ofc. Rees put them in the envelope, and they all left the hospital. Ofc. Altman estimated they left *"two minutes"* after the swabs were collected.

Ofc. Altman said they then went back to the police department. Ofc. Altman did not specifically remember stopping at the 7-11 prior to the police station. Ofc. Altman said Ofc. Rees did seem upset that she had to get a medical clearance because the arrestee *"seemed OK."* Ofc. Altman told Det. Leonard that she did not know what Ofc. Rees' plan was as far as releasing the prisoner or writing a warrant.

Det. Leonard asked Ofc. Altman if she had any other one-on-one interactions or conversations with Ofc. Rees. Ofc. Altman said she had a conversation on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with Ofc. Rees. Ofc. Altman said Ofc. Rees *"seemed pretty negative"* and *"pretty much told me to leave law enforcement."* Ofc. Altman said Ofc. Rees told her it (Law Enforcement) was *"very sexist"* and *"it's hard being a law enforcement officer as a female."* Ofc. Altman said she thought it was unprofessional of Ofc. Rees to be telling her these things as she is new to the profession. Ofc. Altman continued by saying, *"for her to be stomping all over it (Law Enforcement) was surprising."*

Ofc. Altman said Ofc. Rees maintained possession of the swabs and did not know what happened to them. Ofc. Altman said she did not hear Ofc. Rees say anything about what her plans were to do with the swabs while at the station.

#### **McKinzie Rees #19-01, Subject Officer**

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Officer Rees met with Detective Leonard and Sergeant Bell at the Lakewood Police station. The interview was held in the Professional Standards conference room. The following is a synopsis of the interview. Please refer to the interview transcript attached to this investigation for full interview.

Ofc. Rees started the interview by going over the incident in question. Ofc. Rees said after she took Ms. Stringer into custody, she booked her at the Edgewater Police station. At the station, Ofc. Rees stated she completed a warrantless arrest affidavit but did not take buccals or fingerprints from Ms. Stringer. Ofc. Rees stated, *"...our policy is that if we book them into the jail, we don't have to do buccal prints or fingers, 'er buccal swabs or fingerprints...so um, I planned for the jail to do that also..."* When she arrived at the jail, Ofc. Rees stated, *"..they did the full booking process"* and put Ms. Stringer in the *"chute."* After approximately a minute or two, Ofc. Rees stated the jail told her she needed to get a medical clearance for Ms. Stringer and gave her the arrest paperwork along with her handcuffs back.

Ofc. Rees admitted that this made her *"pretty frustrated"* because *"this is a continual issue that I bring people up there and I have to get a med clearance every single time.."* Ofc. Rees said she took Ms. Stringer back out to her patrol car and a jail deputy followed her

out. Ofc. Rees said she told the deputy, "I am not bringing her back..." Ofc. Rees continued by stating that she went to get the medical clearance and had "full intention" on bringing her back, she was just frustrated at the jail.

When Ofc. Rees arrived at the hospital, Ms. Stringer started to disclose to the physician's assistant various ailments she was suffering from. Ofc. Rees said the physician's assistant then handed Ms. Stringer a gown and said, "we are going to admit her." After learning Ms. Stringer was going to be admitted, Ofc. Rees stated, "...and so I was like well if you're gonna admit her then I'm gonna release her from custody knowing that "A" we only have one officer on the street and "B" we could potentially be responsible for all of her medical bills and I have no idea how long she's gonna be there...and so I released her from custody...."

Prior to leaving the hospital, Ofc. Rees said she called Ofc. Perez and requested that he bring a buccal swab kit to the hospital. Ofc. Rees stated she got the kit from Ofc. Perez and took buccal swabs from Ms. Stringer. Ofc. Rees stated she returned to the police station after obtaining the samples. She said, "I got back to the PD and um, in our policy, if we have a buccal swab and no fingerprints, CBI will reject the whole thing all together...and when looking at the buccal swab I did like, I didn't notice that the paper had changed color, meaning I probably didn't get enough of her sample...and since I didn't have her fingerprints there was no way I was going to be, be able to submit it to CBI...so I wrote my report, um, I put in there the one line statement that our policy requires that we did a buc, a buccal swab and um so I wrote that in there.."

Ofc. Rees said a day or a week later, her sergeant sent her report back to her for a "re-work." The sergeant stated in the notes that he only saw one buccal swab packet attached to the case and he was confused why there was only one packet when there were two arrestees. Ofc. Rees said she explained to him that there was a "mix-up" on which buccal swabs were attached because she did the swabs for both arrestees. The sergeant also requested that she provide more detail as to why she left her arrestee at the hospital.

After Ofc. Rees' summary of the incident, she provided Det. Leonard a typed statement which she read out loud. In summary, the statement provides Ofc. Rees' justifications of why she took the actions she did. She references Edgewater policies as well as case numbers of prior incidents where other Edgewater officers have "released arrestees without a biological sample on felony cases." Please refer to the written statement which is attached to this investigation labeled as "Rees written statement."

Det. Leonard asked Ofc. Rees who at the jail advised her that she needed a medical clearance. Ofc. Rees said she did not speak with any medical personnel, and it was a deputy who came out and told her. She said Deputy Carroll was who she interacted with. Ofc. Rees stated, "...it's constantly confrontational...um, every time I go up there and I could have a whole list of these, but I had a guy on a DV that had a scratch on his head and Deputy Carroll sent me to go get steri strips and pretty much every time I go to the jail I get told I need to leave and come back with a med clearance, almost every single

*time so...yes, it was confrontational 'cause at this point, after being rejected so many times, I, I got frustrated...like you guys do this to me every single time...so, yea, it was, it was confrontational..."*

Ofc. Rees was asked if she notified dispatch prior to leaving the jail of her plan to go to Lutheran for a medical clearance. Ofc. Rees said she did notify dispatch that she was going to go to Lutheran for a medical clearance. Det. Leonard asked her if she remembered telling dispatch that she was just going to drop her arrestee off or leave her at the hospital. Ofc. Rees replied, *"I just said I need a med clearance, that's what I always say.."*

Det. Leonard asked Ofc. Rees if the staff at Lutheran told her that Ms. Stringer was going to be admitted or if they told Ms. Stringer. Ofc. Rees said they did not tell her directly and she overheard the physician assistant tell Ms. Stringer that she was going to be admitted. Ofc. Rees said, *"Um, I'm like, well I'm not gonna leave...so we had an officer come in at midnight...at this time it's like I think it was like 2:30...and um, and so he was gonna be on the street by himself, so I'm like well I'm not gonna sit here, 'cause I don't know...I'm thinking of all of these ailments she just said she had right and she had three to six months to live okay...and so I'm thinking well, I could sit here for hours on end, not knowing when I'm gonna...be relieved and then I'm going to give it to the next person that comes in, you know...um, and so I was just like, I could just easily write a warrant for her arrest you know...um, because at the end result it's still the same...she's gonna be arrested...right? So, um, I didn't want to leave the only other officer on shift by himself in Edgewater and I didn't want to sit there for hours on end, not knowing when I would come back and, in my mind, with everything she told me and told the doctor what was going on, she was gonna be there a while, right?"*

Det. Leonard asked Ofc. Rees if she remembered Ofc. Perez and recruit Ofc. Altman meeting her at the hospital with the buccal swab kit. Ofc. Rees forgot that Ofc. Altman was there but did remember Ofc. Perez bringing the kit. Ofc. Rees said she collected the buccal swab from Ms. Stringer put the swab back in the kit. Ofc. Rees estimated she they left the hospital approximately thirty minutes after collecting the swab.

After leaving the hospital, Ofc. Rees said she went back to the police station to finish her paperwork. She stated by the time she finished her report, Sgt. Challis had come into work. Ofc. Rees said she *"briefed"* Sgt. Challis *"on everything"* and *"what happened to the arrestee."*

When asked if she shredded the buccal swab from Ms. Stringer, Ofc. Rees stated, *"Yep...so we have, we have a shredder, so after I read poli...well, I read policy after the fact but um, I asked my sister who's our evidence person, I said hey I have buccal swabs and she's goes well you have to have buccal swabs and fingerprints to submit it to CBI...otherwise, they're not gonna take it...and so I was like okay, well this is no use to me and I shredded it and then um, since our policy states that you have to put the one line statement in your report...when I resubmitted I took it out...because I didn't submit it*

*right? So, hindsight's twenty/twenty...I should have put a little more description that I read the, I, I found out that you needed both and then I shredded it, is what I should have put in my report and I didn't...I just took the one-line statement out..."*

At this point in the interview, Sgt. Bell asked Ofc. Rees if they could return to her exchange with dispatch when leaving the jail. Sgt. Bell wanted to confirm with Ofc. Rees that she told dispatch that she was headed to Lutheran hospital for a medical clearance. Ofc. Rees said she believed that was what she said because that is *"..what I say every time."* Ofc. Rees said, *"Is it possible that I didn't say that, is it possible that I said I was just taking her to the hospital...that, that's possible, I don't know...I don't remember."*

Sgt. Bell asked Ofc. Rees if she intended to bring Ms. Stringer back to the jail. Ofc. Rees stated, *"Yea, I did...once she got the med clearance...before I found out all of these other ailments that would have prevented me from taking her back, if that makes sense...like, I said that I wasn't gonna bring her back because I was super upset about it...um, but I wrote the entire affidavit and when I got to the hospital, I was like I already did all the work, like I might as well take her whenever we get this med clearance...and that's why um, well, no, I guess I didn't because if I had Perez bring me a buccal swab, then I had every intention of releasing her there...because why would I have had him bring me a buccal swab...um, so I called him...so I had every intention of leaving her at the hospital...because I wouldn't have called him to bring me a buccal swab...sorry, I was just now thinking about that...um, I called Perez to bring me a buccal swab...so, with given my decision-making at the time, that would have meant that I was going to leave her there...yea..."*

Sgt. Bell asked Ofc. Rees if she, at any point, attempted to call a supervisor or a detective to discuss releasing Ms. Stringer. Ofc. Rees said she did not and explained by saying, *"Um, to be fair, like I said in my statement, I haven't done that in the past um, and after reading the violation of the policy, I realized that I am supposed to do that, um, but I have not done that in the past...um, and there is a lot of other officers that have not done that in the past...so...um, it was just kind of a common practice I guess...I...I don't know any other way to describe it."*

Sgt. Bell followed the question by asking Ofc. Rees if she had ever been given any direction by Sgt. Challis that if he is not around, it would be okay to contact him. Ofc. Rees said, *"Not, until after this issue it came out...like I said in my statement on the 22<sup>nd</sup> after I realized I violated policy, that directive came out, um but not up until that point..."* Ofc. Rees continued, *"..all supervisors say like you can reach me yea... Um, I'm sure he's stated that before but since I had done this type of thing prior I guess I didn't um, I didn't think to call him...um, because I've done it on other occasions...same with other officers...I mean...and the last thing on that, that piece of paper I gave you, the one that happened the week after mine, was the same thing...they released somebody at the hospital and never notified a supervisor...that's kinda what we did."*

Sgt. Bell asked Ofc. Rees if she notified anyone that she shredded the buccal swabs. Ofc. Rees said she did not, *"No...I should have put it in my report instead of taking the one-line statement out...I should have put in more detail what I did with it...that I took it and then I shredded it, I should have done that in my report...but I did not."*

Det. Leonard then questioned Ofc. Rees about the different versions of the reports she wrote. She stated in her initial report, *"I put the one-line statement per policy that you're supposed to, that um, I completed a buccal swab..."* Ofc. Rees stated that after she got the "re-work" task from Sgt. Challis she took that one-line sentence out. She admitted that she should have put more detail in her report about her shredding the buccal swabs. Det. Leonard then questioned Ofc. Rees about some details she added to her final report in which she indicated that she was "unable to collect fingerprints or a buccal swab for Stringer." Det. Leonard asked Ofc. Rees to clarify whether or not she was able to collect either. Ofc. Rees said, *"...obviously I was did the buccal swab...but I was unable to do the fingerprints."* Ofc. Rees told Det. Leonard that the statement in her report was "incorrect."

Det. Leonard inquired whether there was any intention on Ofc. Rees' part to initially state that she did collect buccal swabs and then change that statement to being unable to collect them. Ofc. Rees answered, "No." Det. Leonard asked Ofc. Rees if she did not want anyone to know she did get the buccal swabs. She replied, *"No. So, I didn't...I didn't tell him exactly that. Um, he said where...your report says that you have the buccal swabs. Where are the buccal swabs? If you don't have...I think on his rework, like if you go through Niche, they like time stamp things and on his rework he made like a one liner that says, I'm not seeing the buccal swabs, if you didn't get it, don't put it in the report...and so that's when I took it out and then he told me in person to add more detail about the P.A. So, I added the more detail about the physician's assistant, what she was stating."*

Sgt. Bell asked Ofc. Rees what her intention was behind not informing her sergeant, or anybody involved in this case that Ms. Stringer was released at the hospital without getting a buccal swab and fingerprints. Ofc. Rees answered, *"Uh, it's just poor report writing honestly. I mean, I'm...I was gonna...I had to do the felony filing on it. Um, and so I I don't know why I didn't tell anybody about it. Um, I mean there was no like...there was no malintent behind it...I...I just...I took it out of my report when Sergeant Challis asked me about it and and um, I guess I just...I didn't think that I needed to tell anybody, but...I mean obviously hindsight's twenty-twenty, I should have told my supervisor that I...that I shredded it because I didn't have the fingerprints with it. I should have done that, but I didn't...there was no malintent. I didn't mean to...it was just poor report writing and poor communication on my part. It wasn't...I mean it didn't benefit me in any way or another, I just did a shitty job...like...that's all I can...I just did a shitty job."*

The following are statements made by Ofc. Rees when she was asked to describe her feelings about the Edgewater Police Department:

*"Yeah. I think it's pretty well known how I feel about it."*

*"Um, so I don't know if this has anything to do with it, but two years ago, I was sexually assaulted by one of my supervisors and um, I was cornered into talking about it a year later, after it happened...I didn't make any disclosures about it and then a year later after it happened, um, I was cornered by a sergeant, a corporal to tell them...I told them what happened...they opened up an investigation...I didn't want to be a part of it because I didn't want to be a victim cause that was going to follow me my entire career and I'm just starting out and so I chose not to be a victim in it...um, they did whatever they did anyway...after that I was retaliated against severely for pretty much the last two years...um, I'm in IAs over this type of stuff when my counterparts do equal things and I...I filed a hostile work environment complaint to my Chief and that went no where and I wasn't getting any sort of relief...for a long time, I was the only female and then um, George Mumma, our commander, came and he saw what was happening...um, he saw that I was getting in trouble for stupid stuff and so he went to the city and asked the city to start an investigation and the city investigated for the last five months and since then, I've been in three IA's in six months and I...after this IA's finished, I'm quitting."*

*"I've been targeted a lot, and everybody sees it, it's just nobody helps me. I mean the city tried to help me, but that was investigated, and I guess a bunch of my allegations were sustained and some of them weren't, but I don't get to know what happens and so I'm ready to end my career in law enforcement because of all of this and the way I have been treated for two years."*

*"Yeah, I feel like I constantly walk on egg shells and I can't...it doesn't matter what I put in a report or what I don't put in a report...somehow it come back...and I watch people violate policy constantly and they never get in trouble for it and I watch other officers release somebody from a hospital and they get counseled on it and I just get thrown to the wolves and put in IA. Like I said, a lot of this could have been cleared up if I...if somebody just would have come and talked to me. Sorry."*

*"I would have explained all of this if a supervisor came and talked to me, and I should have gone to a supervisor and talked to them about it. I don't feel comfortable with anybody in that agency or talking to anybody because of what's happened to me, so I just try and do what I know best and go home."*

Sgt. Bell reminded Ofc. Rees that she signed the Internal Affairs waiver and that the content of the investigation was to remain confidential. Before asking any questions, Ofc. Rees stated that she did tell her sister about the investigation. She stated that her sister also works for the police department and "apparently" she told other people about it.

Det. Leonard finished the interview by asking if the hostility she perceived to be coming from the jail staff had anything to do with any personal relationships she might have with anyone there. Ofc. Rees stated, *"Yeah, my boyfriend works for Jeffco and um, um, he he's pretty good friends with another deputy Cruz there and Cruz works booking a lot and I've worked with Cruz a couple of times and um, Cruz has said that like if they don't...if the jail staff doesn't like the officer that's bringing in an arrestee then they sit on their*

*paperwork and make them get med clearances and they just make their life hard and so Cruz told my boyfriend that and my boyfriend told me that and then I started noticing it more and more that it was happening constantly and um, Deputy Carroll came to my boyfriend and was like, well he kept asking, how's Officer Rees, how's Officer Rees, how's your girlfriend and he was like why the fuck do you care man, like you constantly make her life a living hell every time she brings somebody up here, so why do you keep asking me about her and he goes oh, it's not like that. It's not like that. These officers are just stupid they they bring in people all the time and and they don't realize we're at capacity and we we shouldn't have to do all this and and so my boyfriend's made it clear that he doesn't want anything to do with Deputy Carroll because of the way he treats me and everybody at my agency when they bring in an arrestee."*



**DATE:** April 3, 2022  
**TO:** Officer McKenzie Rees  
**FROM:** Dan Maples, City Manager  
**RE:** IA 22 – 01: Findings and Dispositions

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Pursuant to EPD Policy 1009, and acting as the ultimate supervisor of the Police Department due to the current vacancy in the office of the Chief of Police, I hereby issue the following Findings and Dispositions in association with IA 22-01. By Commander Hamilton’s memo to you on February 16, 2022, you were advised that IA 22-01 had been initiated; the following 4 EPD Policies were set forth in that Memo as the specific Policies under investigation. This memo sets forth the findings and dispositions for each, followed by a description of subsequent process.

## FINDINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

### Policy 318.6.8. Performance

(a) **Sustained:** Your report states “I was unable to collect fingerprints or a buccal swab from Stringer.” You did obtain buccal swabs from the Defendant, a fact that you admit and that others corroborate. This statement in your report is false.

Your report concludes with “Due to the fact that hospital staff wanted to admit her, I was unable to collect fingerprints or a buccal swab from Stringer. I released her from custody.”

These concluding statements are misleading. Hospital staff did not tell you that they were going to admit Stringer or even keep her for an extended period of time. You assumed those things to be true based on overhearing a PA tell Stringer that they would admit her and handing her a gown. The need for you to factually verify your assumptions is demonstrated by the fact that the hospital did not, in fact, admit Stringer.

Further, your report reads as if you decide to release Stringer from custody at the hospital because she was admitted. Your own statements (on DATA radio channel traffic; to Officer Perez; to a Jefferson County Deputy) reveal that you pre-determined that you would release her at the hospital and that you had no intentions of returning her to the jail. You did not have a plausible explanation for this discrepancy when interviewed by Sgt. Bell.

(c) **Sustained:** At the very least, you omitted material information to your supervisor (Sgt. Challis) when you failed to disclose to him that you destroyed the buccal swabs you obtained from Stringer. Sgt. Challis asked you about the swabs. Your explanation is that you thought he was asking you about swabs collected from the *other* arrestee in the case (Stringer’s boyfriend). Even assuming your explanation to be true, you nonetheless failed to tell Sgt. Challis at any time that you had destroyed the buccals you collected from Stringer, without asking or telling a supervisor.

You failed to disclose this material fact, despite having every opportunity to do so, particularly when you were discussing the topic of swabs on this case with Challis already.

### 320.1.1 Report Preparation

**Sustained:** For the same reasons set forth above, your report was not sufficiently detailed for its purpose nor reasonably free of errors. You told Detective Leonard that your statement about not being able to obtain buccal swabs from Stringer was “incorrect.” You told Sgt. Leonard that “it’s just poor report writing honestly...I should have told my supervisor that I...that I shredded it because I didn’t have any fingerprints with it. I should have done that, but I didn’t...there was no malintent. I didn’t mean to...it was just poor report writing and poor communication on my part. It wasn’t...I mean it didn’t benefit me in any way or another, I just did a shitty job...like...that’s all I can...I just did a shitty job.”

The necessity to write factually accurate and error-free reports is essential to the job of patrol officer and is unrelated to an officer’s possible personal motivations or personal benefits from being truthful. Your personal benefit – or lack thereof – is irrelevant to this finding and to this essential job duty.

Your report is further insufficiently detailed in regards to Stringer’s release at the hospital. The process through which you determined to leave Stringer at the hospital and not return her to the jail was not at all clear in your report.

### 901.13. DNA and Fingerprint Collection

**Not Sustained:** Policy requires the collection of a biological sample from felony arrestees. Jail staff is required to collect the sample when an arrestee is booked into the jail. EPD Officers are required to collect samples when arrestees are released at the Department pending the filing of charges.

In this case, the Policy does not give a clear directive on the collection of biological samples when an arrestee is released at a medical facility (or anywhere other than Jail or PD).

The Policy does indicate that collection of the sample is mandatory. For this reason, this finding is not Exonerated and is instead Not Sustained. It was arguably your duty to find a way to complete the biological sample collection even though Policy did not tell you exactly how to do that. You got half-way there by collecting the buccal swabs. It was only your failure to obtain fingerprints to accompany the swabs that prevented you from fulfilling the intent and purpose of the Policy.

### 903.2. Transport and Security for the Sick, Injured or Disabled

(b) - (c) - (d) **Sustained:**

These 3 subsections of Sec. 903.2 give collective direction on how to deal with custody when an arrestee is taken to a medical facility. There are essentially 3 dictates, none of which you satisfied:

1. If an arrestee requires medical treatment (without admission), the officer is to remain with the arrestee at all times. If the officer needs to give medical staff space or privacy, the officer is to maintain close watch near the exit.
2. If an arrestee is admitted to the facility, the officer is to check with a supervisor (whether on-duty or on-call) regarding whether to release the arrestee on summons or pending charges.
3. When an arrestee is released after treatment, the officer should attempt to obtain all relevant medical documents and written report must be made of any injuries and subsequent treatment.

You violated the 1<sup>st</sup> requirement by failing to remain with Stringer even though she was not admitted. You violated the 2<sup>nd</sup> requirement by failing to check with your on-call supervisor when you (incorrectly) assumed that she would be admitted to the hospital; if that was truly your reason for leaving Stringer at the hospital (which is contradicted elsewhere), your next step should then have been to call your on-call supervisor to determine whether it was appropriate to release her there pending charges. Not only did you fail to check with a supervisor, you announced your intent to leave her at the hospital before you even got there.

Your assertion that several others have violated this Policy in the past neither justifies or excuses your violation of it.

Finally, you failed to meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> dictate of this Policy Section by not attempting to obtain any relevant information from the hospital about Stringer's injuries or subsequent treatment. Your incorrect assumption that she would be admitted and your failure to ask for notification of her release made it impossible for you to fulfill this duty.

The factors set forth under this Policy to be considered when deciding whether to release a felony arrestee at a hospital are meant to guide the supervisor's ultimate decision; those are not factors for an officer to weigh him/herself on scene at the hospital without supervisor direction. An exception might exist when an officer knows that a supervisor is unavailable for some reason – an emergency sort of situation where an officer must make a quick decision without any possible supervisor input. In this case, a supervisor was on-call and available to you. You simply did not call.

### **SUBSEQUENT PROCESS**

You will receive a Notice of Proposed Discipline in association with this IA. Upon your receipt of that, you have five (5) calendar days to respond to me orally or in writing. After those five (5) days have elapsed and after due consideration of your response, I will issue a final notice of discipline and, if any discipline is then to be imposed, the effective date(s) of the same.



**DATE:** April 3, 2022  
**TO:** Officer McKenzie Rees  
**FROM:** Dan Maples, City Manager  
**RE:** IA 22 – 01: Notice of Proposed Discipline

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Pursuant to EPD Policy 1009, and acting as the ultimate supervisor of the Police Department due to the current vacancy in the office of the Chief of Police, I hereby issue the following Notice of Proposed Discipline in association with IA 22-01. Attached are the materials I considered to recommend the proposed discipline.

The proposed level of discipline for each Sustained Policy Violation are as follows:

**Policy 318.6.8. Performance – Termination.**

Pursuant to CRS 16-2.5-502, the EPD must promptly notify the DA of “any sustained finding that a peace officer has...knowingly made an untruthful statement concerning a material fact [or] knowingly omitted a material fact in an official justice record.” You were provided notice of the EPD’s intent to send the DA notice of this pending IA (when it was still pending only) on Monday, March 28. Now that this IA has been concluded and the Disposition of this Policy violation is Sustained, the EPD’s obligation to inform the DA is immediate and mandatory.

Under CRS 16-2.5-502, the DA’s Office must notify defense counsel of this credibility disclosure notification in all cases in which you are or could be a material witness. Further, the DA must notify the State POST Board. These consequences are imposed by state law and are not discretionary to the EPD. Even if EPD Command Staff believed your skills as an officer are viable and/or subject to rehabilitation and continuation, this statutory consequence renders it nearly impossible for you to effectively fulfill your job functions as a Patrol Officer in the future. As such, termination is the proposed appropriate and reasonable level of discipline.

**Policy 320.1.1 Report Preparation – Termination.**

For the same reasons stated above, the proposed necessary and reasonable level of discipline is termination.

**903.2. Transport and Security for the Sick, Injured or Disabled – Training.**

After reviewing the materials, it is clear to me that you are not the only EPD member who would benefit from training on this Transport and Security Policy. While I maintain that the failure of others to follow Policy does not render the Policy meaningless or void, I agree with your assertion that the Department as a whole could receive clearer instruction on this Policy. As such, this mandatory training consequence will likely be implemented as a Department-wide training for all members and not solely for you.

In accordance with EPD Policy 1009.10.1, you may respond to this notice of proposed discipline to me, orally in or writing, within five (5) calendar days – in this case, no later than close of business on **Friday, April 8**. If you choose to respond orally, please provide me advance notice, as it is required by Policy to be recorded. I will give due consideration to your response (if you elect to provide one) and use my best efforts to issue final disciplinary decision on Monday, April 11.