



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

Council Bill 120977: Amendments to Chief of Police Investigations Process

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PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

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Outline

- Background – Accountability Ordinance and Chief of Police Investigations
- Policy Goals
- Summary of [Council Bill \(CB\) 120977](#)
- Next Steps

Background – Accountability Ordinance (1/2)

- In 2017, [Ordinance 125315](#) (Accountability Ordinance) established the City's three-pronged police oversight system:
 1. **Office of Police Accountability** – independent, civilian-led office within SPD that investigates misconduct complaints involving SPD employees
 2. **Office of Inspector General for Public Safety** – independent office separate from the Executive that reviews and audits SPD and OPA
 3. **Community Police Commission** – community-based oversight commission that reviews closed OPA investigations
- This system did not include a process for investigating misconduct complaints naming the Chief of Police and ensuring that such complaints would be handled in a fair and transparent manner, free of potential conflicts of interest

Background – Chief of Police Investigations (2/2)

- In 2022, [Ordinance 126628](#) established a specific process for OPA's handling of complaints naming the Chief of Police that included an oversight role for OIG
- Since July 2022, OPA has received over 70 complaints
- Issues with the current investigation process that limit OPA and OIG's ability to address these complaints in a timely, efficient, and accountable manner:
 - Comprehensive intakes for all complaints
 - Staffing restrictions for conducting intakes
 - Inconsistent technical requirements
 - New complaints during an OIG-managed investigation
 - Limited reporting requirements

Policy Goals

- Streamline and clarify the intake/investigation process for complaints naming the Chief of Police
- Provide staffing flexibility
- Support procedural efficiency
- Increase transparency

Summary of CB 120977

Amendments to Chief of Police investigation process:

- Allow OPA, with OIG's agreement, to close qualifying complaints as a *contact log* after an initial screening
- Allow OPA to assign *non-supervisory, civilian staff* to intakes
- Clarify that investigations must be timely, thorough, and *objective*
- Establish a consistent requirement for OIG to *promptly* notify City entities and the complainant
- Allow OIG to initiate and manage the investigation of a new complaint that arises during an ongoing investigation managed by OIG
- Require OIG to include information on complaints in *quarterly reports* for the Mayor, the President of the Council, and the Chair of the Council's public safety committee, and in its *annual report* for the public

Next Steps

- May 27 – Committee discussion and possible vote
- June 3 – Earliest possible date for Council action

Questions?