



Seattle Office of
Inspector General





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Sentinel Event Review:

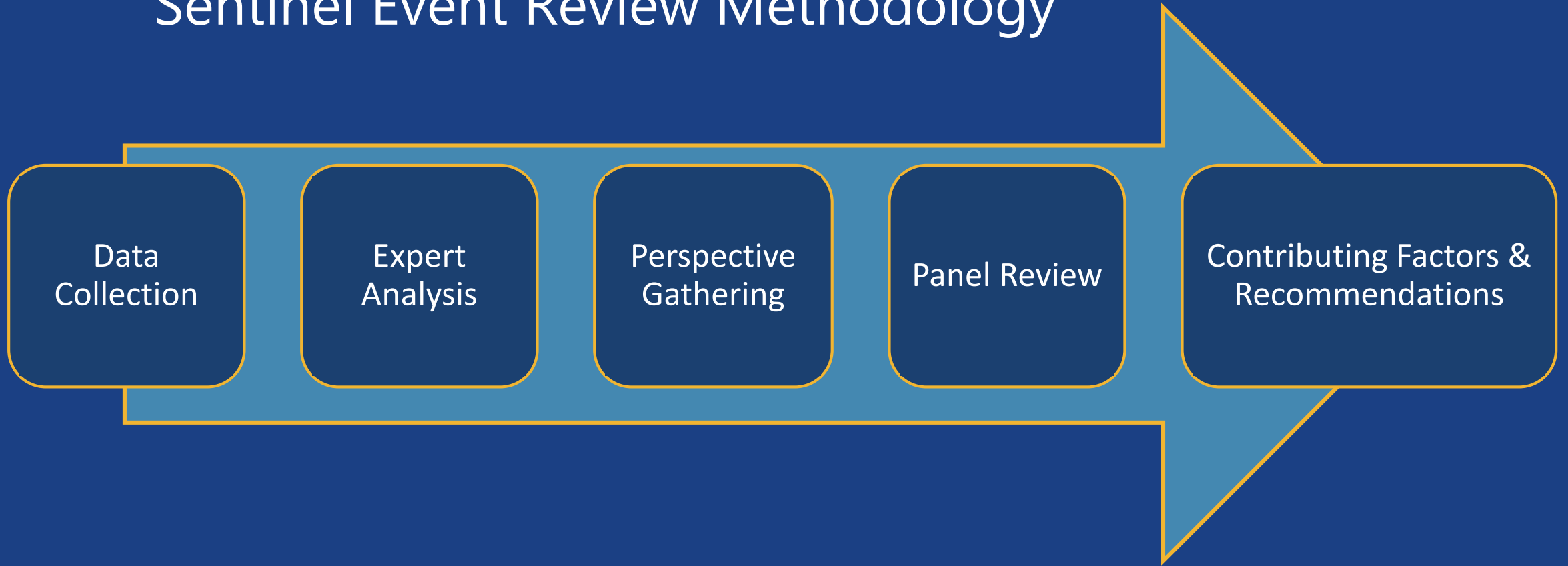
SPD Response to MayDay USA Rally and Counterdemonstration in Cal Anderson Park

Sentinel Event Review (SER)

A collaborative stakeholder effort to identify root causes of significant incidents and design systemic improvements to prevent their recurrence.

- OIG initiated a SER to identify contributing factors resulting in the escalation of tension and conflict, arrests, and uses of force by SPD on May 24, 2025.
- The SER panel consisted of six community members, six SPD personnel from various ranks, and Inspector General Judge.
- The SER report provides panelists' suggested recommendations for improving SPD response to crowd events.

Sentinel Event Review Methodology



Cal Anderson Park - May 24th, 2025

#DontMessWithOurKids Rally & Counterdemonstration

Crowd Management Tactics

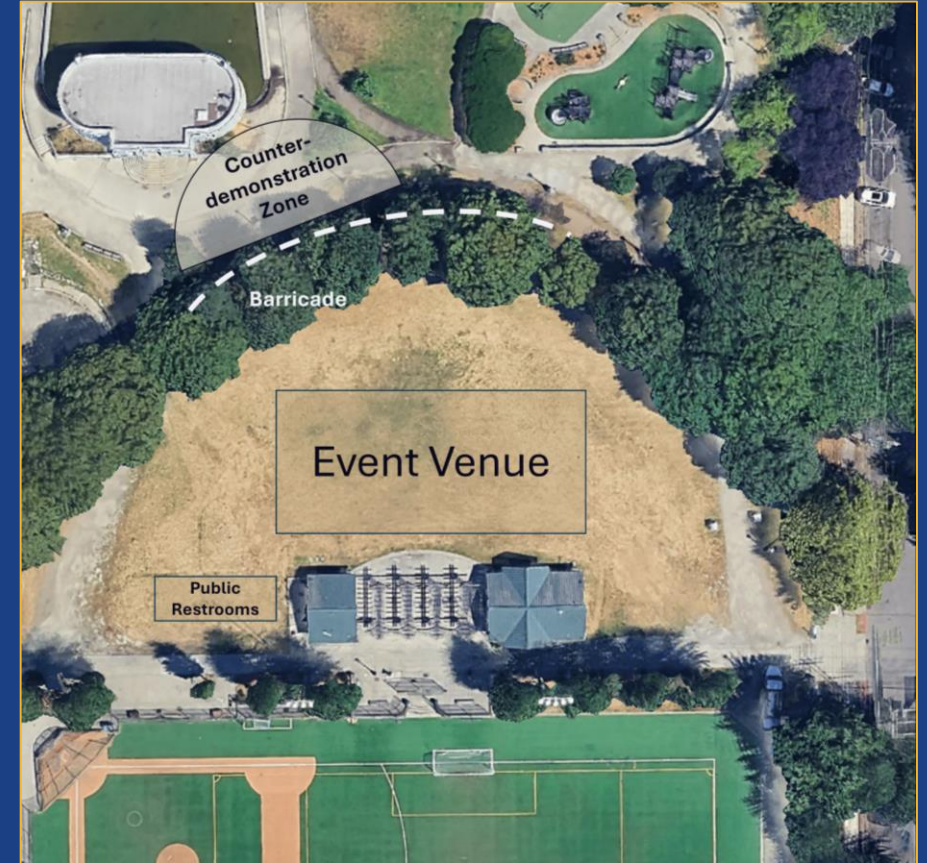
9 Individually Reported Uses of Force

23 Arrests

1 Officer Injury

6 OPA Investigations

Community calls for review of permitting process, SPD use of force, and arrests.



Incidents Considered

OIG identified four key aspects of the day's events for review by the panel.

1. The process to grant a park use permit to a fundamentalist rally in a historically LGBTQ+ neighborhood, and the short time frame for SPD to prepare.
2. The attempted arrest of a counterdemonstrator for misdemeanor property destruction and 11 additional arrests.
3. The use of bicycle fencing to create a counterdemonstration zone, as well as the escalation of conflict, arrests, and uses of force related to the barricade.
4. The continued crowd control protest posture of SPD after the conclusion of the Mayday USA rally. *(Note: Panel discussions were discontinued prior to review of this incident.)*

Contributing Factors

Panelists identified 66 contributing factors across the incidents reviewed.

City
Procedures

Lack of information sharing between City departments delayed SPD awareness of the planned rally.

Cultural
Context

Historic lack of trust between SPD and the LGBTQ+ community has resulted in limited engagement and potential feedback loop wherein community can convey concerns.

Anticipatory
Defensiveness

SPD assumes “black bloc” and “antifa” are established, hierarchical organizations intent on inciting disorder and criminal activity.

Differentiation

SPD perceived minor acts of property damage as an indicator of likely criminal escalation, necessitating a visible deviation from a peaceful protest response posture.



Recommendations

Panelists made 24 suggested recommendations to SPD and the City of Seattle

Community
Legitimacy

Increase pre-event engagement by establishing relationships and consistent lines of communication with community members and organizations.

Situational
Awareness

Improve SPD intelligence beyond open-source social media by working with community to gain deeper understanding of cultural contexts and concerns.

Communication

Prioritize responsiveness to community requests for information, including articulation of probable cause for arrests and reasons for issuing directives or orders.

Tactics

Prioritize targeted arrests of agitators rather than taking actions that serve to escalate the larger crowd.

SPD Response to SER Recommendations

Community Legitimacy:

- Conduct increased outreach and engagement with various communities and organizations for improved education, trust, and relationship-building.
- Promote the SPD LGBTQ+ Liaison to a full-time position.

Situational Awareness:

- Include a brief history or context of event location in SPD intelligence briefings.

Communication:

- Require descriptive verbiage when issuing orders for demonstrators to move back, similar to dispersal orders requiring sufficient direction and time for egress.

Tactics:

- Prioritize targeted arrests of agitators rather than taking actions that serve to escalate the larger crowd

Thank you!



Sentinel Event Review of the
Police Response to the Mayday
USA Rally in Cal Anderson



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