



Acting Sgt. Christi Robbin Initiative #14 Lead and 20/20 Staff

Protecting Constitutional Rights

1. MODERNIZE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION MANAGEMENT

Seattle is and will continue to be a city that supports free speech. The skills and leadership necessary to facilitate public demonstrations continue to evolve both for organizers and for the Seattle Police Department, which is charged with protecting the safety and constitutional rights of all.

To date, we have:

- Developed protocols to focus Commander Training on the rapid removal and arrest of criminal disruptors, and better understand the impacts of intervention on crowd psychology.
- Created a work group to compile a demonstration management field guide, to be finalized in 2013. This guide will be used by Incident Commanders to address peacekeeping, conflict avoidance, removal and arrest of disruptors, intervention and communication.
- Identified a new Training Team for “Advanced Demonstration Management”. Training began in February 2013 for front line patrol officers in intervention tactics and strategies, preserving First Amendment rights and responsibilities, peacekeeping and the role of peacekeepers, police strategies to avoid conflict, and layered communication strategies.
- Written and published a new policy on the use of OC spray as it relates to crowd management. This policy focuses on self-defense, defense of others and significant damage to property.
- Provided training updates to all full time bike officers on bicycle tactics, including alternatives to the use of OC spray. The Training Team will provide a 1-day refresher course, which is currently scheduled for 2013.

- Created a Demonstration Command Group (DCG) to lead the response to all demonstrations. The DCG is a group of leaders within the Department who are specially trained in demonstration management and will be leading trainings for other officers.
- Developed a “Commander’s Worksheet” to provide all Incident Commanders guidance to facilitate early meetings with protest organizers to improve communication, prevent illegal disruption, and provide better service.
- Reviewed and confirmed the requirements of the City of Seattle’s “Intelligence Ordinance,” as a statement of existing City policy to govern the filming of demonstrations. (SMC 14.12.-Collection of Information for Law Enforcement Purposes).

2. DEVELOP PROTOCOLS TO PREVENT LOW-LEVEL OFFENSES FROM ESCALATING

Problems associated with street disorder and associated “low-level offenses” pose challenges for many major cities, including Seattle. People who are impacted by mental health issues and/or substance abuse, and who also engage in low-level offenses, can provide our police with unexpected and difficult challenges. What began as an officer’s attempt to assist or prevent injury can lead to an unexpected use of force. Compassionate policing requires us to be vigilant in addressing low level offenses that have significant impacts on our community, and when doing so, to minimize the likelihood of escalation. Police officers must have clear guidance and support when they are confronted by these often unpredictable situations.

Ongoing work includes:

- Preparing a written policy to guide enforcement of the Pedestrian Interference ordinance in different policing and crowd management contexts.
- Adopting a variable approach to low level offenses, with options ranging from social service referrals to arrest.

Over the past year, we have conducted significant research to develop training in de-escalation and low level offense protocols and for dealings with persons in crisis. These concepts and protocols have been incorporated into the 2013 Street Skills training curriculum and are mandatory for all sworn personnel.