

<b>Seattle Police Department DISCIPLINARY ACTION REPORT</b>	FILE NUMBER <b>OPA 23-0523</b>
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RANK/TITLE <b>Officer</b>	NAME <b>Ron Willis</b>	SERIAL NUMBER <b>6081</b>	UNIT <b>B123B</b>
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SUSTAINED ALLEGATION:

**Violation of Seattle Police Department Policy & Procedure Manual Section:**

- **4.020 Reporting and Recording Overtime/Out of Classification Pay, 4.020-POL-1 Civilians, Officers, Detectives, Sergeants, and Lieutenants, 3. Employee Work-Hour Maximums.**

Specification:

SPD Policy 4.020-POL-1(3) provides: “No employee may work more than 90 hours in one week, from 0300 hours on Saturday until 0300 hours the following Saturday... exceptions must be pre-approved by a captain [or higher].” Your timesheet showed that you worked 133 hours from Saturday, November 11, 2023, through Saturday, November 18, 2023. At least 111 of those hours must have been within the relevant 168-hour window. You did not receive prior approval from a Captain or higher before working those hours. Therefore, you violated policy.

You received a 1-day suspension in 2021 for violating the same policy. You were served with a four-day suspension<sup>1</sup> for violating a different policy on November 3, 2023. Then one week later, you violated Department policy again, knowingly and intentionally.

In your interview with the Office of Police Accountability, you admitted violating policy. You said you did not recall the exact number of hours you worked during the week in question, but you described working a 10-hour patrol shift followed by a 9-hour overtime shift at least five times. In fact, your timecard reflects that you worked 10 hours on November 11, then *19 hours each of the next six days in a row*, then 9 hours on November 18. 93 of your 133 hours during the relevant time period was overtime, paid at time and-a-half, so your misconduct resulted in a significant financial windfall.

Employee Response:

At your *Loudermill* meeting, you admitted knowingly violating policy despite having previously been suspended for doing so. However, you suggested that the policy was not regularly enforced, and that many supervisors had a “don’t ask don’t tell” preference regarding it, because staffing was so low.

You told me you got 5.5 hours of sleep even when you were working 19 hours a day six days in a row, and you told me that’s all the sleep you need. You denied “sleepwalking” through your shifts, cited your nearly thirty years with the Department, and noted your previous military career – which you suggested might explain your ability to function without as much sleep as most people need. You argued that you were being singled out for violating the 90-hour limit, when others had also violated the policy and not been punished, although you declined to provide specifics. You told me your supervisor warned you not to violate this policy again, and you assured me that you have not, and will not.

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<sup>1</sup> You appealed, and the suspension was reduced to three days via a settlement agreement.

Determination of the Chief:

It is not possible to get five-and-a-half hours of sleep in-between 19-hour workdays as you claim you did (the maximum would be five hours). But even if you did go directly to the bunkroom or to your car to sleep immediately upon completing your 19 hours of work every time, I disagree that this would have been sufficient. Rather, it still would have created a safety issue, both for you and for the community we serve. All the scientific research I have seen suggests that sleep-deprived people function similarly to intoxicated people<sup>2</sup> and you did not present me with any contradictory evidence. You claimed that you are unique and can function on very little sleep. I am not convinced that you are able to function consistently and safely on less than 5 hours of sleep between working 6-consecutive 19-hours shifts. You are placing yourself, and those who depend on you at risk.

I am concerned that your previous suspension did not have the intended impact of causing you to change your behavior. It is no secret that the Department is short-staffed, and augmentation is needed and appreciated – **within reason**. But your actions were unreasonable, especially given your prior suspension. You do not have to agree with the 90-hour policy, or the public safety reason for it, but you do have to follow it.

The discipline committee recommended that I should impose a meaningful suspension consistent with the principle of progressive discipline. I intend to, by doubling the top-end of the discipline committee's recommendation. Please understand, this is not intended to be a punishment. Rather, my intent is to ensure you get the message, **unequivocally**, that if you violate the work-hour maximums policy again, you should be prepared to receive serious discipline, up to and including termination.

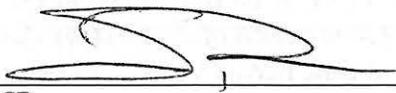
FINAL DISPOSITION

**90 Hours Suspension**

DATE

9/16/24

BY ORDER OF



CHIEF OF POLICE

APPEAL OF FINAL DISPOSITION

Appeals to a Commission:

SWORN EMPLOYEES: Public Safety Civil Service Commission

See Seattle Municipal Code 4.08.100. Employee must file written demand within ten (10) days of a suspension, demotion or discharge for a hearing to determine whether the decision to suspend, demote or discharge was made in good faith for cause. Information on the process for filing a claim with the Public Safety Civil Service Commission may be found on the Commission's website.

Alternative Appeal Options for Represented Employees:

<sup>2</sup> An officer who worked a shift while intoxicated would face severe consequences.

Consult your collective bargaining agreement or union representative to determine eligibility, notice periods, and details of the disciplinary grievance process. Any remedy available through a collective bargaining agreement is an alternative remedy and not in addition to an appeal to the Public Safety Civil Service Commission or Civil Service Commission.