

City of Davis

Independent Police Auditor Report:

Review of Allegation that Dispatcher Was Rude to
911 Caller

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Independent Police Auditor
Michael Gennaco



OIR

GROUP

323-821-0586
7142 Trask Avenue | Playa del Rey, CA 90293
OIRGroup.com

Factual Background

DPD's dispatch center received a call reporting a black male who had followed the caller and was now parked, yelling obscenities, and pulling things out of his car. The dispatcher took the information, followed up with additional questions, and said that a unit would respond. After receiving the additional information, the dispatcher lowered the priority of the call. The individual who reported the incident called back, indicated a concern about the way the dispatcher had handled the call and expressed concern that there had yet to be a police response. As a result of the nature of the activity reported, no officer was dispatched to the call nor did a DPD officer self-dispatch to the call.

The individual who called 911 then filed a complaint against the dispatcher over the way she handled their conversation. The complainant said that the dispatcher interrupted while he was providing an account of the event and did not provide the caller a facile opportunity to set out the details of the incident he had observed.

DPD Investigation and Outcome

DPD opened an investigation into the allegations. It reviewed the recorded 911 calls, the documentation of the call, and interviewed the dispatcher.¹ Based on that review, the investigator determined that while the dispatcher did interrupt the caller to obtain additional information and the caller and dispatcher ended up being confused about the location of the incident, the dispatcher was not rude. The investigator did not identify any performance issues that rose to the level of a policy violation.

The investigator noted, however, that while there was an appropriate basis for downgrading the priority of the call, the dispatcher had failed to contemporarily document the reason for the reduction in priority. The investigator recommended that as a remedial measure, the call should be reviewed with the dispatcher so that there could be a better understanding of how words might be received by a caller.

IPA Review and Analysis

We reviewed the materials relevant to this incident, including the recorded phone calls, DPD police reports, and the internal investigative report. We concurred with the determinations reached by DPD.

¹ The investigative report noted that the investigator attempted to record the interview of the dispatcher but either an equipment or user failure resulted in it not being recorded.

