

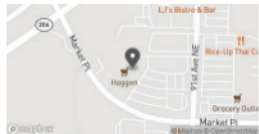
Lake Stevens Police Department

Force Response Report

Incident Detail

OPS #	2025-0033
Date/Time of Received	12/12/2025 15:49
Entered By	Sergeant Chad Wells - SS0131
Date/Time of Occurrence	12/12/2025 15:49
Date/Time Entered	12/13/2025 10:30
Due Date	01/11/2026
Record ID Number	640
Case / Incident #	2025-00023221
Status	Completed
Disposition	Not Within Policy
Date Completed	02/04/2026
Current Stage	—
Source of information	Employee
Priority	—

Incident Location

Location of Occurrence	Snohomish County	
Addresses	8915 Market Place Lake Steven s, WA, 98258 -122.1 1038, 47.999 02	

Assignments

Unit Assigned	Patrol Unit
Investigator Assigned	Un-assigned
Field Investigator	Commander Michael Hingtgen - SS0126
Supervisor Assigned	—
Outside Investigator	—

Incident Level Organization Assignments

Department	Lake Stevens Police	Division	Operations
Squad	Squad 3	Assignment	Patrol Sergeant
	—	Admin Assign	Patrol

Mailbox Routings

There are no mailbox routings

Summary

Juvenile male theft 3 / Minor in possession/consumption of alcohol suspect attempted to pull away during arrest. Juvenile was forced to the ground and detained in handcuffs. No injury nor complaint of injury.

Juvenile transported to hospital by Fire due to extreme intoxication.

Use of Force Specific

More Than 1 Citizen Involved	No	Reason For Use Of Force	Probable cause
Involved citizen was charged/arrested in relation to the incident	Yes	Involved citizen distance from employee(s)	1 feet to 3 feet
Involved Employee(s) Injured	No	Involved citizen was injured	No
Involved Employee was Taken to Hospital	No	Involved Citizen was Taken to Hospital	Yes
Service Rendered at Time of Incident	Public request for service	Involved citizens build	Medium
Weather Conditions During Incident	Clear	Involved citizens height	5'7" to 5'9"
Light Conditions During Incident	Daylight	Employee assessment of citizen condition at time of incident:	Alcohol and Drugs

Crisis Details

Crisis Behaviors

Belligerent / uncooperative behavior

Force or Violence

Citizen threatened violence towards police

Techniques

Certified crisis intervention officer was dispatched , Verbalization , Certified crisis intervention officer was requested , Reportable force , At least one attending officer was CIT certified , Certified crisis intervention officer arrived on-scene

Final Disposition

Arrested

Involved Employees

Sergeant Chad Wells - SS0131

Policy Outcome	Not yet entered			
Snapshot Data	Role	Involved Employee		
	Employment Status at Time of Incident	Active	Body camera worn	BWC-Reviewed by Supervisor
	Employee was in uniform	Yes	Employee was arrested	—

Employee was off-duty	No	Employee was employed off-duty	No
First Name	Chad	Last Name	Wells
Sex	Male	Race	White
Age when incident was received	55		
Weight (lb)	—	Height (ft and in)	—

Employee Assignment Snapshot

Title/Rank at time of incident	Sergeant	Years employed at time of incident	11
Badge number at time of incident	SS0131	Years assigned at organization at time of incident	—
Supervisor	Deputy Chief Dean Thomas		
Department	Lake Stevens Police	Division	Operations
Squad	Squad 3	Assignment	Patrol Sergeant
	—	Admin Assign	Patrol

Allegations

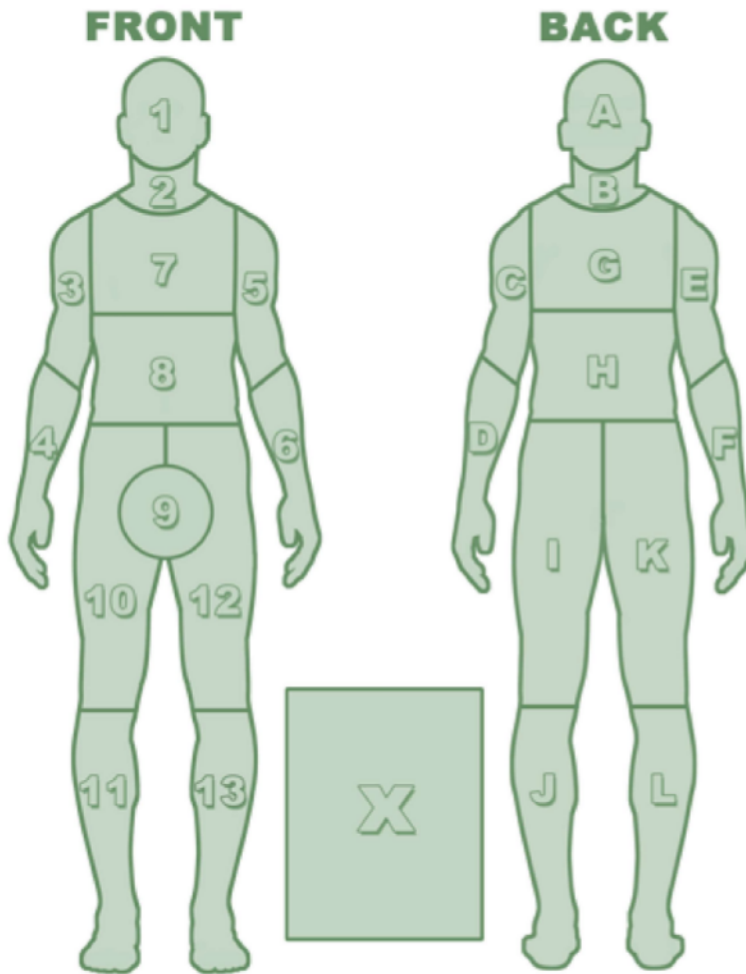
Force: Excessive/Improper
 - Directive: Force Response
 - Initial Recommended Finding: Formal Investigation - Date Of Initial Recommended Finding: 02/04/2026
 - Actions Taken:
 ▪ Formal - Internal Initiated-Not Within Policy - 02/04/2026

De-escalations Used By Employee

Verbal Commands, CIT, Time or Pace of Event, Negotiator, Officers Presence

Forces Used

- Officer(s) Presence
 - Was the Force Effective: No
 - Points: 1
- Verbal Commands
 - Was the Force Effective: No
 - Points: 2
- Soft Empty Hand(s)
 - Was the Force Effective: Yes
 - Points: 3
- Takedown/Tackle
 - Was the Force Effective: Yes
 - Points: 4



Injuries Sustained By Employee

No injuries noted or visible
- Points:

Treatments

No treatments applied

Employee Witnesses

Officer Doug Dreher - SS0165

Snapshot Data	Role	Backup		
Employment Status at Time of Incident	Active	Body camera worn	BWC-Reviewed by Supervisor	
First Name	Doug	Last Name	Dreher	
Sex	Male	Race	White	
Age when incident was received	43			
Weight (lb)	—	Height (ft and in)	—	

Employee Assignment Snapshot

Title/Rank at time of incident	Officer	Years employed at time of incident	4
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Badge number at time of incident	SS0165	Years assigned at organization at time of incident	—
Supervisor	Sergeant James Barnes		
Department	Lake Stevens Police	Division	Support Services
Squad	Support Services	Assignment	K-9 Officer
	—	Admin Assign	Patrol

Officer Jason Sutton - SS0197

Snapshot Data	Role	Backup		
Employment Status at Time of Incident	Active	Body camera worn	BWC-Reviewed by Supervisor	
First Name	Jason	Last Name	Sutton	
Sex	Male	Race	White	
Age when incident was received	—			
Weight (lb)	—	Height (ft and in)	—	

Employee Assignment Snapshot	Title/Rank at time of incident	Officer	Years employed at time of incident	1
	Badge number at time of incident	SS0197	Years assigned at organization at time of incident	—
	Supervisor	Sergeant Gavin Heinemann		
	Department	Lake Stevens Police	Division	Operations
	Squad	Squad 2	Assignment	Patrol Officer
		—	Admin Assign	Patrol

Corporal Chris Lyons - SS0134

Snapshot Data	Role	Backup		
Employment Status at Time of Incident	Active	Body camera worn	BWC-Reviewed by Supervisor	
First Name	Chris	Last Name	Lyons	
Sex	Male	Race	White	
Age when incident was received	48			

Weight (lb)	—	Height (ft and in)	—	
Employee Assignment Snapshot	Title/Rank at time of incident	Corporal	Years employed at time of incident	10
	Badge number at time of incident	SS0134	Years assigned at organization at time of incident	—
	Supervisor	Sergeant Chad Wells		
	Department	Lake Stevens Police	Division	Operations
	Squad	Squad 3	Assignment	Corporal
		—	Admin Assign	Patrol

Citizens Involved



Juvenile Offender Records

Resistances	Active physical resistance Physical non-compliance or flight Flight or attempted flight
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Charges	Citizen Charge Type	Citizen Charge Category	Date Charged	Citizen Charge Disposition
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Injuries Sustained By Citizen

No injuries noted or visible
- Points:

Treatments No treatments applied

Citizen Witnesses

Christian Galindo

Date Of Birth	06/23/1999	Gender	Male	
Race	White	Ethnicity	—	
Addresses	—	Phone Numbers	—	
Snapshot Data	First Name	Christian	Last Name	Galindo
	Role	Witness	Age when incident was received	26
	Height (ft)	—	Height (in)	—
	Weight (lb)	184.99		
	Sexual Orientation	—	Expressed Gender	—
	Primary Language	—	Limited English	—
	Experiencing Crisis	—	Self Reported Mental Issue	—
	Homeless	—	Armed	—

Janet L Holmes

Date Of Birth	05/11/1974	Gender	Female	
Race	White	Ethnicity	—	
Addresses	—	Phone Numbers	—	
Snapshot Data	First Name	Janet	Last Name	Holmes
	Role	Reporting Party	Age when incident was received	51
	Height (ft)	5	Height (in)	3.0
	Weight (lb)	150.00		
	Sexual Orientation	—	Expressed Gender	—

Primary Language	—	Limited English	—
Experiencing Crisis	—	Self Reported Mental Issue	—
Homeless	—	Armed	—

Carly M Hay

Date Of Birth	04/26/1977	Gender	Female	
Race	White	Ethnicity	—	
Addresses	—	Phone Numbers	—	
Snapshot Data	First Name	Carly	Last Name	Hay
	Role	Witness	Age when incident was received	48
	Height (ft)	5	Height (in)	5.0
	Weight (lb)	198.99		
	Sexual Orientation	—	Expressed Gender	—
	Primary Language	—	Limited English	—
	Experiencing Crisis	—	Self Reported Mental Issue	—
	Homeless	—	Armed	—

Attachments

Date Attached	Description	Attachment Type
01/07/2026	23221 wit galindo	pdf
01/07/2026	23221 lyons	pdf
01/07/2026	23221 reciept	pdf
01/07/2026	23221 wells	pdf
02/01/2026	Force Review Template-SS-2022	docx
01/07/2026	23221 wit Hay	pdf
01/07/2026	23221 super	pdf
01/07/2026	23221 wit holmes	pdf
01/07/2026	23221 sutton	pdf

BlueTeam Routings

01/07/2026 14:51



Sergeant Chad Wells » Commander Michael Hingtgen
For review

01/14/2026 08:51



Commander Michael Hingtgen
Needs to be reviewed by DT Lead Holland for Force Review

01/14/2026 08:51



Commander Michael Hingtgen » Corporal Jason Holland
Can you please review this use of force? I'll need a force review form. If you do not have one of those, I'll send it to you

02/01/2026 05:25



Corporal Jason Holland
Forward to Commander Hingtgen for review

02/01/2026 05:25



Corporal Jason Holland » Commander Michael Hingtgen
Please review

02/04/2026 07:41



Commander Michael Hingtgen
The force was reviewed by Ofc. Holland, Lead DT Instructor. See attached Use of Force Review.

Based on the above mentioned review and my own knowledge of current policy, training, and best practices, I agree with the review that this was unreasonable and unnecessary.

02/04/2026 07:41



Commander Michael Hingtgen » Deputy Chief Dean Thomas
See review

02/04/2026 10:39



Deputy Chief Dean Thomas
[Forward to OPS by Chief Jeffrey Beazizo] Command Reviewed - Not within policy - Internal Investigation started - Deputy Chief on approved leave - forwarded to OPS

Redaction Log

Reason	Page (# of occurrences)	Description
Juvenile Offender Records	6 (1) 7 (1)	Under RCW 13.50.050, juvenile records are confidential, and may be released only to victims and their immediate families, the juvenile offender's school, and other criminal justice agencies. See RCW 13.50.050(2), (4), (7), (9). Since you do not fall into one of these categories, the report you are requesting is protected and may not be released without a signed court order.

USE OF FORCE REVIEW

25-00023221

12/12/25

SGT. Wells

INCIDENT:

LSPD officers were dispatched to a theft of alcohol from a Haggen Grocery (8915 Market PL, Lake Stevens, WA). The reporting party described a 16-year-old male, with tan skin, a grey sweatshirt, and True Religion jeans. It was also reported that a "Blue Hawaiian" alcoholic beverage was concealed in his pants. He was last seen by the reporting party to be walking towards Market PL. He was being followed by a juvenile female that was crying and telling him to stop.

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

The reporting party (Haggen Manager) advised SNOCO911 that she was requesting trespass and theft charges if the juvenile was found as he refused to return the alcohol. At a minimum, probable cause existed to arrest the suspect for theft 3rd and potentially minor in possession of alcohol if he were to be determined to be under the age of 21.

FACTORS:

1. The severity of the crime:

The reported crime was shoplifting/theft 3rd. This is a non-violent crime, property crime.

2. Is the suspect an immediate threat to citizens, officers or others:

There was no reported assault or violent behavior from the theft suspect. There were also no known weapons involved in this incident. Based on the written reports from officers and BWC footage, the suspect did not appear to be an immediate threat to citizens, officers, or others prior to any force being used.

3. Is the suspect actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight:

The suspect was not evading or attempting to evade arrest by flight. He immediately stopped when ordered to do so by police. According to SGT. Wells' written report, the suspect pulled away from him when he attempted to gain control of his arm.

REPORTED FORCE RESPONSE:

(Provide a brief break down of the force used. Tactics, de-escalations, less lethal, impacts, pursuit intervention, etc.)SGT. Wells contacted the suspect as he was walking away from the scene of the theft. SGT. Wells pulled up to the suspect and advised him to stop as he was getting out of his patrol vehicle. SGT. Wells then told the suspect to "put it down, put it down or I am going to put you on the ground". SGT. Wells then grabs the suspect's right arm. From this point, the BWC footage is of the suspects sweatshirt as SGT. Wells has closed the distance and is standing in close proximity to the suspect. For the next several seconds, I can't see what SGT. Wells is doing due to the camera footage being blocked. According to SGT. Wells report, after grabbing the suspect's wrist, he turned it in a natural rotation to place it behind his back. This proved to be successful. SGT. Wells stated that the suspect then began to physically turn away from him as if to flee or fight. SGT. Wells said that he then pushed the suspect to

the ground. SGT. Wells used his forearm to pin the suspect to the ground. His forearm was on the suspect's chest, but he then stated that he couldn't breathe. SGT. Wells said that he moved his forearm because of this and used it to push the suspect's face away from him. CPL. Lyons, OFC. Sutton and an unidentified WSP Trooper then arrived a short time later. The suspect was rolled over and then placed into handcuffs without further incident.

POLICY:

(If there is any policy associated with the tactics or force used, provide the specific policy below.

Example is:

Lexipol Policy: 300.2 Force Response Policy

The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern, both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Employees must have an understanding of, and true appreciation for, their authority and limitations. The proper use of force is essential to ensure impartial policing and build trust in the community. While there are circumstances where individuals will not comply with the law unless compelled or controlled by officers through the use of force, employees must remain mindful that they derive their authority from the community and that unreasonable force degrades the legitimacy of that authority (Model Policy).

This is especially true with respect to overcoming resistance while engaged in the performance of law enforcement duties. It is the policy of the Department to use a reasonable amount of force to conduct lawful public safety activities. The response option employed will be reasonable and based on the totality of circumstances.

(a) Employees involved in a response to resistance incident have the responsibility of providing the facts and circumstances they believe justified the response to resistance by completing the necessary reports, memorandums, etc.

(b) Circumstances that may govern the reasonableness of using a particular response option include, but are not limited to:

1. Graham v. Connor (US Supreme Court 490 US 386 (1989))

(a) The severity of the crime

(b) Whether the subject poses an immediate threat to the safety of officers or others

(c) Whether the subject is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight

2. Above are the three primary bullet points, but the Supreme Court recognizes other factors can be taken into consideration:

(a) Totality of the circumstances

1. Environment/bystanders
2. Reasonableness

(b) Safety Priorities

1. Directly Involved

2. Indirectly Involved
3. Problem Solvers
4. Problems

(c) Conditions

1. Suspect – Known violence potential/criminal history/behavior/armed or access to weapons
2. Venue – structure/vehicle/open area
3. Environment – Geography/backdrops/innocent citizens/traffic

(d) Employees need to consider the following when responding to resistance:

1. Ability - Does the subject have the apparent physical means to cause harm?

(a) Employees must also evaluate his/her ability to handle the threat posed by the subject.

2. Opportunity - The circumstances are such that the subject has the apparent ability to harm the employee/s or others.

(a) Distances, barriers, and opportunities for both the subject/s and employee/s should be taken into account.

3. Jeopardy - Is the subject causing an imminent and immediate threat to the employee/s or others?

(a) Denotes actions, cues, or indicators demonstrated by the subject.

4. Preclusion - All other alternatives have been reasonably considered and cannot be employed in a safe manner based on the totality of the circumstances the employee/s or others are facing.

Lexipol Policy: 300.2.1 CRITICAL DECISION MAKING

Use of critical decision making can help officers achieve the expectations outlined in this manual. When safe and feasible, when making or considering whether to contact with a member of the public, officers shall (Washington State Office of the Attorney General Model Use of Force Policy):

- (a) Begin assessment and planning with available facts before arriving at the scene.
- (b) Request available resources, as needed, such as a crisis intervention team or other appropriate specialty unit or professionals
- (c) Collect information when on scene.
- (d) Assess situations, threats, and risks.

- (e) Identify options for conflict resolution.
- (f) Determine a reasonable course of action.
- (g) Review and re-assess the situation as it evolves.

Nothing in this policy precludes officers from taking quick action when faced with a life-threatening situation, such as an active shooter. When safe and feasible, officers shall not unnecessarily jeopardize their own safety or the safety of others through tactical decisions that unreasonably place themselves or others at risk including but not limited to (Washington State Office of the Attorney General Model Use of Force Policy):

(a) Immediately approaching a person without proper evaluation of the situation.

(b) Leaving insufficient space between an officer and the person.

(c) Not providing time for a person to comply with commands.

(d) Unnecessarily escalating a situation.

Lexipol Policy: 300.4.1 AUTHORIZED USE OF FORCE

An employee may use physical force upon another person when necessary to:

(a) Protect against a criminal offense when there is probable cause that the person has committed, is committing, or is about to commit the offense;

(b) Effect an arrest;

(c) Prevent an escape as defined under chapter 9A.76 RCW;

(d) Prevent a person from fleeing or stop a person who is actively fleeing a lawful temporary investigative detention, provided that the person has been given notice that he or she is being detained and is not free to leave;

(e) Take a person into custody, transport a person for evaluation or treatment, or provide other assistance authorized under chapter 10.77, 71.05, or 71.34 RCW;

(f) Take a minor into protective custody when authorized or directed by statute;

(g) Execute or enforce a court order authorizing or directing a peace officer to take a person into custody;

(h) Execute a search warrant;

(i) Execute or enforce an oral directive issued by a judicial officer in the courtroom or a written order where the court expressly authorizes a peace officer to use physical force to execute or enforce the directive or order;

(j) Take a person into custody when authorized or directed by statute; or

(k) Protect against an imminent threat of bodily injury to the employee, another person, or the person against whom force is being used.

While the ultimate objective of every law enforcement encounter is to avoid or minimize

Lexipol Policy: 300.5.1 ALTERNATIVE TACTICS - DE-ESCALATION

When possible, employees shall use all reasonably available and appropriate de-escalation tactics to reduce the need for force and increase voluntary compliance (RCW 10.120.020). Depending on the circumstances, employees have a number of de-escalation tactics to choose from which include but are not limited to (Model Policy):

(a) Employing tactical positioning and repositioning to maintain the benefit of distance and cover, such as backing away from the person to re-assess and determine which tactics to use.

(b) Placing barriers or using existing structures to provide a shield or other protection between employees and a person.

(c) Attempting to slow down or stabilize the situation to allow for the consideration and arrival of additional resources that may increase the likelihood of a safe resolution.

(d) Requesting and using available support and resources, such as a crisis intervention team, a designated crisis responder, other behavioral health providers, or back-up employees, including more experienced employees or supervisors.

(e) Using clear instructions and verbal persuasion.

(f) Employing verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to calm a person (e.g., speaking slowly, regulating tone and body language, uncrossing one's arms, minimizing hand gestures, reducing bright, flashing lights and sirens).

(g) Attempting to communicate in non-verbal ways when verbal instructions would be inadequate (e.g., when the person and employee speak different languages, the person is unable to hear or understand instructions).

(h) Communicating in a way that demonstrates respect for people's dignity (e.g., clearly explaining the employee's actions and expectations, listening to the person's questions and concerns and responding respectfully, being neutral and fair when making decisions).

(i) When there are multiple employees, designating one employee to communicate to avoid competing or confusing commands.

(j) Exhibiting patience while using all available and appropriate tactics and resources to provide as much time as needed to resolve the incident without using force.

(k) Formulating a plan

(l) Leaving the area if there is no threat of imminent harm and no crime has been committed or about to be committed.

Lexipol Policy: 300.5.5 IDENTIFICATION, WARNING, AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLY PRIOR TO THE USE OF FORCE

When safe and feasible, prior to the use of force, employees shall (Model Policy):

(a) Identify themselves as law enforcement officers.

1. Identification is unnecessary when the employee has objectively reasonable grounds to believe the person is aware of this fact.

(b) Attempt to determine whether the person has a special need, mental condition, physical limitation, developmental disability, language barrier, or other factors that may impact the person's ability to understand and comply with employees commands.

(c) Provide clear instructions and warnings.

(d) Warn a person that force will be used unless the person's resistance ceases.

(e) Give the person a reasonable opportunity to comply with the warning that force may be used.

Lexipol Policy: 300.10 MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Once it is reasonably safe to do so, medical assistance shall be obtained for any person who exhibits signs of physical distress, has sustained visible injury, expresses a complaint of injury or continuing pain, or was rendered unconscious. Any individual exhibiting signs of physical distress after an encounter should be continuously monitored until the individual can be medically assessed. Individuals should not be placed on their stomachs for an extended period, as this could impair their ability to breathe (RCW 10.93.190).

REVIEW:

Based on the reviewed written officers' reports and available BWC footage, the force that was used appeared to be minimal. A control tactic was used on the suspect's right wrist. This is commonly referred to as a straight wrist twist or a wrist lock. While SGT. Wells had control of the suspect's right wrist, the suspect pulled away thus causing SGT. Wells to take the suspect to the ground. These techniques are taught within the training curriculum of the WA Basic Law Enforcement Academy and the LSPD defensive tactics program. The suspect was then rolled over once additional units arrived and placed into handcuffs without further incident.

Prior to the use of force, SGT. Wells pulled his patrol vehicle right next to the suspect. He ordered him to stop as he was getting out of his patrol vehicle. SGT. Wells then order the suspect to "put it down, put it down or I am going to put you on the ground". SGT. Wells wrote in his report that the suspect had a cell phone in his right hand and a half empty bottle of liquor. He presumably drank half of the liquor as this was the bottle that he stole from the store. SGT. Wells wrote that the suspect immediately tried to hide bottle by positioning his body at an angle where SGT. Wells could not see the suspect's left hand anymore. SGT. Wells was concerned that if the suspect chose to fight, he would be armed with a glass bottle that could be used against him.

After several commands, SGT. Wells closed the distance and grabbed the suspect's right arm. This resulted in the above-described use of force. While previously stated, the actual use of force was minimal, but there was no attempt at de-escalation, no use of time, distance, or shielding. Sgt. Wells believed that he could have been assaulted with that bottle. This is a reasonable belief with, time, distance, and shielding being mechanisms that are used to increase the safety for an officer so that force could potentially not be used. The suspect initially provided verbal non-compliance or maybe even a misunderstanding of what SGT. Wells was attempting to communicate. It was apparent that the suspect appeared to be under the influence of intoxicating/alcoholic beverages which was also referenced by SGT. Wells in his case report. It is unknown if the suspect understood the instructions that were given or if he was acting like he didn't understand. Nonetheless, it was unnecessary to close the distance and attempt to control the suspect yet. He was fleeing from SGT. Wells, there was no indication that the suspect used physical force in the theft which would make this a felony crime, and there was no indication that the suspect was a danger to the public at large. There were multiple LSPD units within seconds of SGT. Wells and there is nothing at this time that shows an immediate need to take the suspect into custody. I do agree that requesting the suspect to place the bottle on the ground and keeping his hands within view is appropriate for officer safety. Once more officers were on-scene, better control could have been obtained and hopefully force would not have had to have been used.

It was not reported nor did it appear that the suspect was injured during the use of force. While SGT. Wells was lying on top of the suspect, he advised SGT. Wells that he couldn't breathe. Sgt. Wells advised that he moved his forearm as it was on top of his chest. This is appropriate as we can't always immediately get off of someone especially since he was not in custody and SGT. Wells was by himself. The issue with this is that the suspect advised SGT. Wells that he could not breathe. SGT. Wells dismissed the suspect's statement by saying that he could breathe just fine and that it was the wrong answer. Due to several high profile incidents throughout this country these are not acceptable statements. In CPL. Lyons' BWC footage, you can see that the suspect is lying on the ground while SGT.

Wells is lying on top of him. The suspect does not appear to be resisting in anyway shape or form at this point. Once the suspect was placed into handcuffs, medical aid should have been requested. This did not occur until close to 20 minutes after the use of force and the suspect was vomiting in the back of a patrol vehicle. Once the suspect was placed into custody, there were no other suspects, and the suspect was then placed in the back of a patrol vehicle. It was then safe and feasible to request medical aid. Medical aid should have been requested a lot sooner than it was, especially with the statement that the suspect made in reference to not being able to breathe. Ultimately, the suspect was transported to the hospital due to his intoxication level.

The use of force for this incident was unnecessary as fast as it occurred. Therefore, making the use of force unnecessary and unreasonable. If as an officer, you believe that you might be assaulted or the subject has an impact weapon, creating as much space as you can is important and a standard throughout the State of Washington. Time, distance, and shielding is LSPD policy, listed in the WA Attorney General Model Use of Force, and trained within the Patrol Tactics course that we are required to take every few years. As the LSPD Defensive Tactics Lead Instructor, I also teach this standard during department in-service training. SGT. Wells is or was previously as Patrol Tactics Instructor.

RECOMMENDATION:

Forward this review to LSPD command staff for further.

USE OF FORCE REVIEW

25-00023221

12/12/25

SGT. Wells

INCIDENT:

LSPD officers were dispatched to a theft of alcohol from a Haggen Grocery (8915 Market PL, Lake Stevens, WA). The reporting party described a 16-year-old male, with tan skin, a grey sweatshirt, and True Religion jeans. It was also reported that a "Blue Hawaiian" alcoholic beverage was concealed in his pants. He was last seen by the reporting party to be walking towards Market PL. He was being followed by a juvenile female that was crying and telling him to stop.

LEGAL AUTHORITY:

The reporting party (Haggen Manager) advised SNOCO911 that she was requesting trespass and theft charges if the juvenile was found as he refused to return the alcohol. At a minimum, probable cause existed to arrest the suspect for theft 3rd and potentially minor in possession of alcohol if he were to be determined to be under the age of 21.

FACTORS:

1. The severity of the crime:

The reported crime was shoplifting/theft 3rd. This is a non-violent crime, property crime.

2. Is the suspect an immediate threat to citizens, officers or others:

There was no reported assault or violent behavior from the theft suspect. There were also no known weapons involved in this incident. Based on the written reports from officers and BWC footage, the suspect did not appear to be an immediate threat to citizens, officers, or others prior to any force being used.

3. Is the suspect actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight:

The suspect was not evading or attempting to evade arrest by flight. He immediately stopped when ordered to do so by police. According to SGT. Wells' written report, the suspect pulled away from him when he attempted to gain control of his arm.

REPORTED FORCE RESPONSE:

(Provide a brief break down of the force used. Tactics, de-escalations, less lethal, impacts, pursuit intervention, etc.)SGT. Wells contacted the suspect as he was walking away from the scene of the theft. SGT. Wells pulled up to the suspect and advised him to stop as he was getting out of his patrol vehicle. SGT. Wells then told the suspect to "put it down, put it down or I am going to put you on the ground". SGT. Wells then grabs the suspect's right arm. From this point, the BWC footage is of the suspects sweatshirt as SGT. Wells has closed the distance and is standing in close proximity to the suspect. For the next several seconds, I can't see what SGT. Wells is doing due to the camera footage being blocked. According to SGT. Wells report, after grabbing the suspect's wrist, he turned it in a natural rotation to place it behind his back. This proved to be successful. SGT. Wells stated that the suspect then began to physically turn away from him as if to flee or fight. SGT. Wells said that he then pushed the suspect to

the ground. SGT. Wells used his forearm to pin the suspect to the ground. His forearm was on the suspect's chest, but he then stated that he couldn't breathe. SGT. Wells said that he moved his forearm because of this and used it to push the suspect's face away from him. CPL. Lyons, OFC. Sutton and an unidentified WSP Trooper then arrived a short time later. The suspect was rolled over and then placed into handcuffs without further incident.

POLICY:

(If there is any policy associated with the tactics or force used, provide the specific policy below.

Example is:

Lexipol Policy: 300.2 Force Response Policy

The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern, both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Employees must have an understanding of, and true appreciation for, their authority and limitations. The proper use of force is essential to ensure impartial policing and build trust in the community. While there are circumstances where individuals will not comply with the law unless compelled or controlled by officers through the use of force, employees must remain mindful that they derive their authority from the community and that unreasonable force degrades the legitimacy of that authority (Model Policy).

This is especially true with respect to overcoming resistance while engaged in the performance of law enforcement duties. It is the policy of the Department to use a reasonable amount of force to conduct lawful public safety activities. The response option employed will be reasonable and based on the totality of circumstances.

(a) Employees involved in a response to resistance incident have the responsibility of providing the facts and circumstances they believe justified the response to resistance by completing the necessary reports, memorandums, etc.

(b) Circumstances that may govern the reasonableness of using a particular response option include, but are not limited to:

1. Graham v. Connor (US Supreme Court 490 US 386 (1989))

(a) The severity of the crime

(b) Whether the subject poses an immediate threat to the safety of officers or others

(c) Whether the subject is actively resisting arrest or attempting to evade arrest by flight

2. Above are the three primary bullet points, but the Supreme Court recognizes other factors can be taken into consideration:

(a) Totality of the circumstances

1. Environment/bystanders
2. Reasonableness

(b) Safety Priorities

1. Directly Involved

2. Indirectly Involved
3. Problem Solvers
4. Problems

(c) Conditions

1. Suspect – Known violence potential/criminal history/behavior/armed or access to weapons
2. Venue – structure/vehicle/open area
3. Environment – Geography/backdrops/innocent citizens/traffic

(d) Employees need to consider the following when responding to resistance:

1. Ability - Does the subject have the apparent physical means to cause harm?

(a) Employees must also evaluate his/her ability to handle the threat posed by the subject.

2. Opportunity - The circumstances are such that the subject has the apparent ability to harm the employee/s or others.

(a) Distances, barriers, and opportunities for both the subject/s and employee/s should be taken into account.

3. Jeopardy - Is the subject causing an imminent and immediate threat to the employee/s or others?

(a) Denotes actions, cues, or indicators demonstrated by the subject.

4. Preclusion - All other alternatives have been reasonably considered and cannot be employed in a safe manner based on the totality of the circumstances the employee/s or others are facing.

Lexipol Policy: 300.2.1 CRITICAL DECISION MAKING

Use of critical decision making can help officers achieve the expectations outlined in this manual. When safe and feasible, when making or considering whether to contact with a member of the public, officers shall (Washington State Office of the Attorney General Model Use of Force Policy):

- (a) Begin assessment and planning with available facts before arriving at the scene.
- (b) Request available resources, as needed, such as a crisis intervention team or other appropriate specialty unit or professionals
- (c) Collect information when on scene.
- (d) Assess situations, threats, and risks.

- (e) Identify options for conflict resolution.
- (f) Determine a reasonable course of action.
- (g) Review and re-assess the situation as it evolves.

Nothing in this policy precludes officers from taking quick action when faced with a life-threatening situation, such as an active shooter. When safe and feasible, officers shall not unnecessarily jeopardize their own safety or the safety of others through tactical decisions that unreasonably place themselves or others at risk including but not limited to (Washington State Office of the Attorney General Model Use of Force Policy):

(a) Immediately approaching a person without proper evaluation of the situation.

(b) Leaving insufficient space between an officer and the person.

(c) Not providing time for a person to comply with commands.

(d) Unnecessarily escalating a situation.

Lexipol Policy: 300.4.1 AUTHORIZED USE OF FORCE

An employee may use physical force upon another person when necessary to:

(a) Protect against a criminal offense when there is probable cause that the person has committed, is committing, or is about to commit the offense;

(b) Effect an arrest;

(c) Prevent an escape as defined under chapter 9A.76 RCW;

(d) Prevent a person from fleeing or stop a person who is actively fleeing a lawful temporary investigative detention, provided that the person has been given notice that he or she is being detained and is not free to leave;

(e) Take a person into custody, transport a person for evaluation or treatment, or provide other assistance authorized under chapter 10.77, 71.05, or 71.34 RCW;

(f) Take a minor into protective custody when authorized or directed by statute;

(g) Execute or enforce a court order authorizing or directing a peace officer to take a person into custody;

(h) Execute a search warrant;

(i) Execute or enforce an oral directive issued by a judicial officer in the courtroom or a written order where the court expressly authorizes a peace officer to use physical force to execute or enforce the directive or order;

(j) Take a person into custody when authorized or directed by statute; or

(k) Protect against an imminent threat of bodily injury to the employee, another person, or the person against whom force is being used.

While the ultimate objective of every law enforcement encounter is to avoid or minimize

Lexipol Policy: 300.5.1 ALTERNATIVE TACTICS - DE-ESCALATION

When possible, employees shall use all reasonably available and appropriate de-escalation tactics to reduce the need for force and increase voluntary compliance (RCW 10.120.020). Depending on the circumstances, employees have a number of de-escalation tactics to choose from which include but are not limited to (Model Policy):

(a) Employing tactical positioning and repositioning to maintain the benefit of distance and cover, such as backing away from the person to re-assess and determine which tactics to use.

(b) Placing barriers or using existing structures to provide a shield or other protection between employees and a person.

(c) Attempting to slow down or stabilize the situation to allow for the consideration and arrival of additional resources that may increase the likelihood of a safe resolution.

(d) Requesting and using available support and resources, such as a crisis intervention team, a designated crisis responder, other behavioral health providers, or back-up employees, including more experienced employees or supervisors.

(e) Using clear instructions and verbal persuasion.

(f) Employing verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to calm a person (e.g., speaking slowly, regulating tone and body language, uncrossing one's arms, minimizing hand gestures, reducing bright, flashing lights and sirens).

(g) Attempting to communicate in non-verbal ways when verbal instructions would be inadequate (e.g., when the person and employee speak different languages, the person is unable to hear or understand instructions).

(h) Communicating in a way that demonstrates respect for people's dignity (e.g., clearly explaining the employee's actions and expectations, listening to the person's questions and concerns and responding respectfully, being neutral and fair when making decisions).

(i) When there are multiple employees, designating one employee to communicate to avoid competing or confusing commands.

(j) Exhibiting patience while using all available and appropriate tactics and resources to provide as much time as needed to resolve the incident without using force.

(k) Formulating a plan

(l) Leaving the area if there is no threat of imminent harm and no crime has been committed or about to be committed.

Lexipol Policy: 300.5.5 IDENTIFICATION, WARNING, AND OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLY PRIOR TO THE USE OF FORCE

When safe and feasible, prior to the use of force, employees shall (Model Policy):

(a) Identify themselves as law enforcement officers.

1. Identification is unnecessary when the employee has objectively reasonable grounds to believe the person is aware of this fact.

(b) Attempt to determine whether the person has a special need, mental condition, physical limitation, developmental disability, language barrier, or other factors that may impact the person's ability to understand and comply with employees commands.

(c) Provide clear instructions and warnings.

(d) Warn a person that force will be used unless the person's resistance ceases.

(e) Give the person a reasonable opportunity to comply with the warning that force may be used.

Lexipol Policy: 300.10 MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Once it is reasonably safe to do so, medical assistance shall be obtained for any person who exhibits signs of physical distress, has sustained visible injury, expresses a complaint of injury or continuing pain, or was rendered unconscious. Any individual exhibiting signs of physical distress after an encounter should be continuously monitored until the individual can be medically assessed. Individuals should not be placed on their stomachs for an extended period, as this could impair their ability to breathe (RCW 10.93.190).

REVIEW:

Based on the reviewed written officers' reports and available BWC footage, the force that was used appeared to be minimal. A control tactic was used on the suspect's right wrist. This is commonly referred to as a straight wrist twist or a wrist lock. While SGT. Wells had control of the suspect's right wrist, the suspect pulled away thus causing SGT. Wells to take the suspect to the ground. These techniques are taught within the training curriculum of the WA Basic Law Enforcement Academy and the LSPD defensive tactics program. The suspect was then rolled over once additional units arrived and placed into handcuffs without further incident.

Prior to the use of force, SGT. Wells pulled his patrol vehicle right next to the suspect. He ordered him to stop as he was getting out of his patrol vehicle. SGT. Wells then order the suspect to "put it down, put it down or I am going to put you on the ground". SGT. Wells wrote in his report that the suspect had a cell phone in his right hand and a half empty bottle of liquor. He presumably drank half of the liquor as this was the bottle that he stole from the store. SGT. Wells wrote that the suspect immediately tried to hide bottle by positioning his body at an angle where SGT. Wells could not see the suspect's left hand anymore. SGT. Wells was concerned that if the suspect chose to fight, he would be armed with a glass bottle that could be used against him.

After several commands, SGT. Wells closed the distance and grabbed the suspect's right arm. This resulted in the above-described use of force. While previously stated, the actual use of force was minimal, but there was no attempt at de-escalation, no use of time, distance, or shielding. Sgt. Wells believed that he could have been assaulted with that bottle. This is a reasonable belief with, time, distance, and shielding being mechanisms that are used to increase the safety for an officer so that force could potentially not be used. The suspect initially provided verbal non-compliance or maybe even a misunderstanding of what SGT. Wells was attempting to communicate. It was apparent that the suspect appeared to be under the influence of intoxicating/alcoholic beverages which was also referenced by SGT. Wells in his case report. It is unknown if the suspect understood the instructions that were given or if he was acting like he didn't understand. Nonetheless, it was unnecessary to close the distance and attempt to control the suspect yet. He was fleeing from SGT. Wells, there was no indication that the suspect used physical force in the theft which would make this a felony crime, and there was no indication that the suspect was a danger to the public at large. There were multiple LSPD units within seconds of SGT. Wells and there is nothing at this time that shows an immediate need to take the suspect into custody. I do agree that requesting the suspect to place the bottle on the ground and keeping his hands within view is appropriate for officer safety. Once more officers were on-scene, better control could have been obtained and hopefully force would not have had to have been used.

It was not reported nor did it appear that the suspect was injured during the use of force. While SGT. Wells was lying on top of the suspect, he advised SGT. Wells that he couldn't breathe. Sgt. Wells advised that he moved his forearm as it was on top of his chest. This is appropriate as we can't always immediately get off of someone especially since he was not in custody and SGT. Wells was by himself. The issue with this is that the suspect advised SGT. Wells that he could not breathe. SGT. Wells dismissed the suspect's statement by saying that he could breathe just fine and that it was the wrong answer. Due to several high profile incidents throughout this country these are not acceptable statements. In CPL. Lyons' BWC footage, you can see that the suspect is lying on the ground while SGT.

Wells is lying on top of him. The suspect does not appear to be resisting in anyway shape or form at this point. Once the suspect was placed into handcuffs, medical aid should have been requested. This did not occur until close to 20 minutes after the use of force and the suspect was vomiting in the back of a patrol vehicle. Once the suspect was placed into custody, there were no other suspects, and the suspect was then placed in the back of a patrol vehicle. It was then safe and feasible to request medical aid. Medical aid should have been requested a lot sooner than it was, especially with the statement that the suspect made in reference to not being able to breathe. Ultimately, the suspect was transported to the hospital due to his intoxication level.

The use of force for this incident was unnecessary as fast as it occurred. Therefore, making the use of force unnecessary and unreasonable. If as an officer, you believe that you might be assaulted or the subject has an impact weapon, creating as much space as you can is important and a standard throughout the State of Washington. Time, distance, and shielding is LSPD policy, listed in the WA Attorney General Model Use of Force, and trained within the Patrol Tactics course that we are required to take every few years. As the LSPD Defensive Tactics Lead Instructor, I also teach this standard during department in-service training. SGT. Wells is or was previously as Patrol Tactics Instructor.

RECOMMENDATION:

Forward this review to LSPD command staff for further.

SUMMARY OF CALL FOR SERVICE

On 12/12/2025 Lake Stevens Patrol units were radio dispatched to Haggen for a reported theft call. The notes of the call stated that a 16 yo male wearing a grey sweatshirt and True Religion jeans had stolen alcohol and had concealed it in his pants. Arriving officers gave radio updates on the last known direction of the juvenile suspect. It should be noted that units were also notified that Haggen wanted the suspect trespassed and charged if found.

Sgt. Wells arrived in the area and immediately began an area check for the suspect. Sgt. Wells located the juvenile male a short distance from the incident location. Sgt. Wells pulled his marked patrol vehicle in close proximity of the suspect and immediately exited his vehicle while giving verbal commands to “put it down”. Sgt. Wells commands were loud and clear. Sgt. Wells quickly closed the distance with the suspect and grabbed his right arm and attempted to place him in a cuffing position. The suspect then tensed and pulled away from Sgt. Wells, causing Sgt. Wells to regain control by pushing the suspect to the ground on his back. It should be noted that the area in which the suspect and Sgt. Wells went to the ground was a grassy area. Sgt. Wells landed on the suspect’s chest area and kept contact with his forearm. The suspect stated he could not breathe. Sgt. Wells stated “wrong answer” as he moved his forearm off the suspects chest and towards his face to move it away from him.

Incoming units arrived on scene within seconds of the force and assisted with cuffing the suspect. It should be noted that the suspect did not complain of injury.

At approximately 1607 hours Sgt. Wells contacted me via phone advising me about the force incident.

FORCE REVIEW

The initial BlueTeam entry for this incident was completed by Sgt. Wells and forwarded to Commander Hingtgen on 01/07/26. Due to the use of force involving a minor, it was sent to Officer Holland for a force review. It should be noted that Officer Holland is the lead DT instructor for LSPD and has been tasked to review use of force reports involving injury and/or juveniles. Officer Holland provided a written use of force review and was attached to the original BlueTeam.

It was Officer Hollands assessment that although the force used was minimal it was an unnecessary escalation due to the lack of time, distance, and shielding. Officer Holland cited several policy violations in his review including 300.2.1 (Critical Decision Making), 300.5.1 (Alternative Tactics – De-escalation).

Following my completion of the review of BWC from Sgt. Wells along with the written case report, I agree with Officer Holland's assessment of policy violation 300.5.1 (Alternative Tactics – De-escalation). It is my opinion that Sgt. Wells should have waited a very short time for his back up to arrive to contact the suspect. The use of time and distance may have de-escalated the suspect's motive to tense up and ultimately be forced to the ground.

Due to the policy violation, an internal investigation was initiated. The review of case reports and body camera footage was noted and logged in the investigation. The BWC footage was consistent to what was written by Sgt. Wells.

OUTCOME

Sgt. Wells committed policy violation by not waiting a short time for back up to arrive to alleviate the possibility of use of force against a juvenile suspect. Although the force used was minimal, the lack of de-escalation augmented the decision to the use force. A letter will be added to Sgt. Wells personnel file outlining the steps in this investigation and the possibility of progressive discipline if similar policy violations occur.