



Brandon Johnson
Mayor

Department of Police · City of Chicago
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Larry Snelling
Superintendent of Police

April 22, 2024

Andrea Kersten
Chief Administrator
Civilian Office of Police Accountability
1615 West Chicago Avenue, 4th Floor
Chicago, IL. 60622

**RE: Superintendent's Partial Concurrence and Partial Non-Concurrence with COPA's proposed findings.
Complaint Register Number #2022-0001634
Police Officer Matthew Ripley, #16198**

Dear Chief Administrator,

After careful review of the recommendations made by the Investigator in this matter, the Superintendent concurs with the findings of COPA related to two (2) allegations against Police Officer Matthew Ripley but does not concur with COPA's finding related to three (3) additional allegations against the Officer.

STATEMENT OF FACTS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

COPA sustained (5) allegations against P.O. Matthew A. Ripley ("Officer Ripley"), a former Chicago Police Department (CPD) member, seeking separation stemming from a firearm discharge while Officer Ripley was on a Leave of Absence (LOA).

On the date of the incident, DuPage County Sheriff's were dispatched to a residence in [REDACTED] where they received a 911 call from a person who claimed to be [REDACTED] of Officer Ripley and who stated that Officer Ripley was having a mental health crisis and had just discharged a firearm in front of the residence.¹ Sheriff's responded to the scene along with the MERIT SWAT team and spoke with Officer Ripley's [REDACTED] who confirmed that Officer Ripley discharged a firearm outside the residence and was still armed and suicidal.²

MERIT SWAT and negotiators made announcements via a PA system to Officer Ripley who was still inside the residence.³ Officer Ripley eventually walked outside the residence with his hands up and was placed into custody. Officer Ripley admitted to discharging the firearm outside the residence and gave consent to the Officers on scene to remove his firearms and ammo from the residence.⁴ Officer Ripley was eventually transported to Central DuPage Hospital for further evaluation.

¹ Att. 26, SOPC2205459 Caller 1 Audio 1 ([REDACTED]).

² Att. 1, DuPage County Sheriff Incident Report at p. 4.

³ Att. 1 at p. 5.

⁴ *Id.*

COPA made the following determinations on the allegations:

It is alleged by COPA that on about April 19, 2022, Officer Ripley, Star #16198, committed misconduct through the following acts or omissions:

1. Discharged his firearm without justification, in violation of G03-02; **SUSTAINED**
2. Failed to notify OEMC of his firearms discharge, in violation of G03-06; **SUSTAINED**
3. Failed to secure his firearms, in violation of U04-02; **SUSTAINED**
4. Failed to complete the Annual Prescribed Weapon Qualification Program, in violation S11-03-01; **SUSTAINED**
5. Failed to register non-duty firearms with CPD, in violation of U04-02; **SUSTAINED**

ANALYSIS

The evidence is legally sufficient with regard to Allegation one (1) against Officer Ripley in that he discharged his firearm without justification, in violation of G03-02-03. The determination of legal sufficiency of the evidence is based upon the statement of the witness and the admission of the accused.

The witness, Officer Ripley's [REDACTED] states on a body-worn camera, ("BWC"), "I think he fired a pistol outside."⁵ Additionally, during the 911 call, the witness states, "he just fired a gun outside...".⁶

During his detention on scene, Officer Ripley admits to firing his firearm outside into the ground. Detective Chiesa of the DuPage County Sheriff's Office asks Officer Ripley if any shots were fired in the house to which Officer Ripley responds, "No" but when asked if any shots were fired outside, Officer Ripley responds, "Yeah" and continues to explain that he did not think the weapon was going to go off.⁷

This was an unjustified weapons discharge and though allegedly due to Officer Ripley's questionable mental state at the time, was never-the-less reckless in nature and unacceptable by the Department.

The evidence is legally sufficient with regard to Allegation two (2) against Officer Ripley in that he failed to notify OEMC of his firearms discharge, in violation of G03-06.

General Order G03-06, *Firearm Discharge and Officer-Involved Death Incident Response and Investigation*, Section V, Subsection A, regarding all firearm discharges, states, "the involved member(s) will immediately notify the Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) providing all relevant information and requesting additional resources." This section of the General Order also includes a note stating, "If the firearm discharge or officer involved death incident occurs outside the City of Chicago, the member will also notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction and the Chicago Police Department's Crime

⁵ Att. 2, BWC_BALON_- SUICIDE_THREAT_BARRICADED_SUBJECT at 09:21.

⁶ Att. 28, SOPC2205459 Caller 2 Audio 1 ([REDACTED]) at 00:45.

⁷ Att. 3, BWC_Chiesa_-mental_health_suspect_interview at 07:25.

Prevention and Information Center (CPIC)."⁸

In this incident, Officer Ripley was immediately detained by the DuPage County Sheriff's Department and transported to the hospital for a mental evaluation, technically leaving him unable to contact OEMC or CPIC immediately after the weapons discharge as he was admitted and evaluated for seventy-two (72) hours.⁹ However, there is no record of Officer Ripley contacting or notifying the Department of the discharge after he was released which Officer Ripley was required to do.

The evidence is not legally sufficient with regard to Allegation three (3) against Officer Ripley in that he failed to secure his firearms, in violation of U04-02.

Uniform and Property Order U04-02, *Department Approved Weapons and Ammunition*, Section II, Subsection G states, "Sworn Members are to secure ALL firearms which they own or possess, in a manner that a reasonable person would believe will prohibit access by unapproved individuals, theft, or loss."

In this incident, there is no evidence presented by COPA that Officer Ripley failed to secure his firearms. At the time of the incident, Officer Ripley was at the residence where his weapons were located and nothing suggests that anyone else had access to the weapons. The weapons were located in the room that Officer Ripley occupied and was present at the time. Additionally, Officer Ripley was never interviewed and asked how he secures his weapons when he was not home to suggest that he fails to secure his weapons.

The evidence is not legally sufficient with regard to Allegation four (4) against Officer Ripley in that he failed to complete the Annual Prescribed Weapon Qualification Program, in violation S11-03-01.

Uniform and Property Order U04-02, *Department Approved Weapons and Ammunition*, Section II, Subsection D(4) states, "Department members will continue to follow the provisions delineated in the Department directive titled, *Annual Prescribed Weapon Qualification Program and Taser Recertification*" and: a. qualify annually with all prescribed, alternate prescribed, or auxiliary firearms, and short-barreled revolvers prior to carrying the firearm on or off duty."

However, Special Order S11-03-01, *Annual Prescribed Weapon Qualification Program and Taser Recertification*, Section III, Subsection A(1) states, "Temporary deferments from this program will be available to members: 1. on the medical roll, suspension, or leave of absence." Officer Ripley status at the time of the incident is unknown. He was granted a leave of absence in 2019.¹⁰

The evidence is not legally sufficient with regard to Allegation five (5) against Officer Ripley in that he failed to register non-duty firearms with CPD, in violation of U04-02.

Uniform and Property Order U04-02, *Department Approved Weapons and Ammunition*, Section II, Subsection F states, "Sworn members will register all duty and non-duty firearms with the Department."

There is no definitive evidence that shows that the firearms recovered were not registered properly with the Department.

⁸ General Order G03-06, Firearm Discharge and Officer-Involved Death Incident Response and Investigation, Section V, Subsection A, NOTE.

⁹ Att. 1 at p. 5.

¹⁰ Att. 37.


CONCLUSION

Neither COPA nor the Department has had any contact with Officer Ripley since the incident. The Department's latest inquiry (April 15, 2024) to Human Resources regarding Officer Ripley's employment status revealed that The Office of Public Safety Administration (OPSA) sent a "Regular and Certified Mail" letter on December 26, 2023 to Officer Ripley explaining that his failure to report to duty upon the termination of his leave of absence (March 19, 2020) has caused his employment with the City of Chicago to be terminated effective March 20, 2020.

The Department finds Allegation one (1) against Officer Ripley for discharging his firearm without justification and Allegation two (2) for failing to notify OEMC of the firearms discharge both legally sufficient and direct violations of Department policy. Officer Ripley's action of discharging his weapon, although allegedly into the ground, was reckless and could have caused serious bodily injury or even death to civilians in the immediate area. Officer Ripley admitted to these actions and never justified these actions. The Department concurs with COPA's recommended penalty of Separation.

The CPD looks forward to discussing this matter with you pursuant to MCC 2-78-130(a)(iii). If COPA and the CPD find themselves at an impasse on the resolution of this matter, the CPD asks that COPA include all attachments from the log investigation to the member of the Police Board selected to conduct the review.

Sincerely,



Larry Snelling
Superintendent of Police