Brandon Johnson
Mayor

Department of Police · City of Chicago
3510 S. Michigan Avenue · Chicago, Illinois 60653

Larry B. Snelling
Superintendent

July 14, 2025

Lakenya White
Interim Chief Administrator
Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA)
1615 West Chicago Avenue, 4th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60622

Re: Superintendent's Partial Non-Concurrence with Findings and with Penalty Recommendations
Complaint Log No. 2024-0006157
Officer Samantha Surma #17345
Officer Jose D. Gomez #14332

Dear Interim Chief Administrator White:

After a careful review of the above-referenced complaint log number investigation, the Chicago Police Department (the Department) partially concurs with the recommended sustained findings and concurs with the penalty recommendations as they pertain to Officer Samantha Surma (#17345). However, the Department does not concur with the recommended sustained findings nor the penalty recommendations concerning Officer Jose D. Gomez (#14332).

The COPA investigation recommended a penalty of a 1 to 3-day suspension for Officer Samantha Surma following findings that she:

1. Conducted a patdown search of [redacted] without justification.
2. Searched [redacted] purse without justification.

The Department does not concur with the finding related to the first sustained allegation. Officer Samantha Surma articulated reasonable facts and circumstances supporting that [redacted] was armed and dangerous, justifying the protective patdown. In her investigative stop report, Officer Surma documented, based on her knowledge and experience, that individuals often pass firearms to one another and may carry multiple firearms. Furthermore, during her statement to COPA on December 15, 2024, Officer Surma explained that she believed a firearm was in the vehicle due to the furtive movements and demeanor of the driver upon initial observation. Based on these reasonable suspicions, Officer Surma conducted and properly documented the protective patdown.

The Department concurs with the finding related to the second sustained allegation, that Officer Surma was not justified in searching [redacted] purse, and will implement a one-day suspension accordingly.

Regarding Officer Jose D. Gomez, the COPA investigation recommended a reprimand after

concluding he:

1. Assisted Officer Surma in conducting an unjustified patdown search of [redacted]
2. Assisted Officer Surma in unjustifiably searching [redacted] purse.

The Department does not concur with the sustained findings against Officer Gomez on either allegation. Instead, the Department recommends an alternate finding of not sustained. Body-worn camera footage clearly shows Officer Gomez did not assist in either the patdown or the search of the purse. Officer Surma approached and immediately informed [redacted] that she would conduct a patdown. Officer Gomez was merely present in the area and did not participate in the searches. While COPA alleges Officer Gomez was maintaining security, it does not specify the nature of this security. The Department maintains that Officer Gomez's role was that of a guard officer and that he did not assist in the patdown or purse search.

On behalf of Superintendent Larry B. Snelling, the Department looks forward to discussing this matter further with you pursuant to MCC 2-78-130(a)(iii).

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Kelly A. Schnoor
Department Advocate
Bureau of Internal Affairs