

Office Of Internal Oversight Review
KEY CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES OF A CATEGORICAL USE OF FORCE INCIDENT
Officer-Involved Shooting—3916 Grand Meadow Street on April 12, 2011

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to publish key conclusions, recommendations and outcomes of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department's internal review of this incident. There are a variety of actions that can be taken administratively in response to the Department's review of a deadly force incident. The review may reveal that no action is required or determine that additional training is appropriate for all officers in the workforce, or only for the involved officer(s). The review may reveal the need for changes in departmental policies, procedures, or rules. Where departmental rules have been violated, formal discipline may be appropriate. The goal of the review is to improve both individual and the agency's performance.

Synopsis of Event:

On April 12, 2011, at approximately 1139 hours, Officers Gregory Watkins and Roberto Henderson responded to a call of a suicidal male at 3916 Grand Meadow Street. The male, Abdul Hamlan, was reported to have been abusing Hydrocodone, going through withdrawals, and to be in possession of a handgun. He was seen by his female roommate lying on the garage floor and crying, with a gun to his head.

The officers, both Crisis Intervention Team (C.I.T.) certified, arrived and located Hamlan lying on his right side, just inside the garage. The garage door was open, exposing Hamlan to the street and neighboring houses.

Officer Watkins took up a position of cover behind a vehicle, parked in the driveway, and attempted to engage Hamlan in conversation. Officer Henderson moved north and attempted to find a tactical position from which to provide cover for Officer Watkins. Unable to find satisfactory cover, Officer Henderson moved back around the vehicle to a position near Officer Watkins.

Officer Watkins identified himself and Hamlan stated, "Just go ahead and shoot me then." After a brief conversation, Hamlan removed his hands from behind his head and revealed he was holding a semi-automatic handgun. Hamlan pointed the gun toward Officers Watkins and Henderson.

Officer Watkins initially fired two rounds at Hamlan, striking the hood of the vehicle he was taking cover behind. Officer Watkins assessed the situation and saw Hamlan maintained possession of his handgun and continued to point it in their direction. Officer Watkins fired four additional rounds, striking Hamlan and causing him to drop his handgun. Hamlan was immediately transported to Mountain View Hospital where he died from his injuries.

For a detailed narrative of the incident, please see the District Attorney's decision, reference Abdul Hamlan, Event Number 110412-1675, and the LVMPD Force Investigative Team (FIT) Officer's Report under the same event number.

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Outcomes:

The internal review resulted in the following:

1. The Use of Force Review Board determined the officer's actions were in accordance with Department Policy. No policy violations were found.
2. The internal review concluded the officer's performance was in accordance with Department standardized tactics and training.

The Criminal Investigation:

LVMPD FIT conducted the criminal investigation of this incident. Their investigation was submitted to the District Attorney's Office for review. In their examination of the FIT case submission, the District Attorney's Office determined that, "Based on the review of the available materials and the application of Nevada law to the known facts and circumstances surrounding the officer involved death of Abdul Hamlan, it has been determined that the actions of Officer Greg Watkins were reasonable and that the shots fired by Officer Watkins were justified to prevent the decedent from shooting his firearm and to protect the officers on the scene. There is no evidence that Officer Watkins acted unlawfully, or with malice aforethought."

LVMPD's Use of Force Review Board:

This matter was heard by the Board on August 30, 2011, and Officer Watkins was found to be justified in his actions. The Sheriff approved the Board's recommendation.

Below are the conclusions made after the Use of Force Review Board and the internal reviews were completed:

1) Communication

The internal review determined the original call taker transferred the call to medical prior to receiving adequate information to determine the need of either a police or fire/medical response. The director of the Communications Bureau was notified and based on the internal review of this incident (and others) it is now protocol for the Communications Bureau Quality Assurance Supervisor to review every critical incident to ensure each incident is handled within standard procedures and policy.

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The initial radio traffic was broadcast onto the Northwest Area Command (NWAC) channel and updates were delivered in a timely fashion to responding officers. The details of the call outlined this event as needing a CIT response, causing C.I.T. Officers Watkins and Henderson, working as a two-officer unit who were in close proximity, to assign themselves.

Officers Watkins and Henderson announced their arrival, Dispatch announced Code Red (channel designated for emergency traffic only), and Officers Watkins and Henderson confirmed there was a Code Red. Officers announced shots fired, called for medical assistance and additional units for the crime scene. The officers' and dispatcher's responses were appropriate.

2) Tactics and the Use of Force

The review examined Officer Watkins' and Henderson's approach to the residence. Their use of cover and concealment, both on the approach to the open garage where Hamlan was located, as well as their position upon arrival, was reasonable.

Upon locating Hamlan, Officer Watkins immediately began a conversation with him. Hamlan moved his hands from behind his head, revealing a semi-automatic handgun, which he then pointed toward Officers Watkins and Henderson. Officer Watkins fired two rounds at Hamlan, reassessed the threat and fired another four rounds, ultimately striking Hamlan. This was found to be reasonable.

The internal review concluded Officer Watkins acted in self-defense and defense of Officer Henderson when confronted by an armed subject pointing a weapon at him. Officer Watkins fired his weapon to stop the threat.

In evaluating the supervision, or the command and control, of this incident, the review noted:

- Upon initially broadcasting the call, Dispatch asked the area sergeant if he copied the call and need for CIT. He responded that he did and that he was en route.
- The area sergeant asked Dispatch if it was determined if the weapon was a handgun or a rifle.
- A lieutenant and two sergeants arrived shortly after Officers Watkins and Henderson requested additional units and coordinated the crime scene requirements.

The review concluded the supervisors appropriately took control of the scene and handled the critical incident effectively.