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Police Advisory Commission's Statement on Fatal Shooting of Walter Wallace Jr.

(Oct. 27, 2020) Yesterday, Philadelphia witnessed a tragic confrontation in which city police officers fatally shot Walter Wallace Jr., 27, on a West Philly street.

The videos captured by residents show a chaotic interaction and a horrific scene, the cries of grieving family and friends that cannot be forgotten.

The Police Advisory Commission extends condolences to the family of Walter Wallace Jr. and to all Philadelphians grieving. As the details of the fatal shooting emerge, the Commission will be monitoring the investigation.

The Commission repeats its call for less lethal force options and increased training and application of de-escalation techniques in high-pressure encounters, especially those involving mental health scenarios, so that first responders have more appropriate tools to better handle complex situations like this one.

The Commission has joined with others in reimagining 9-1-1 responses to better deal with calls like the one involving Mr. Wallace. The Police Department's recent addition of a behavioral health provider to assist in 9-1-1 response to those in crisis and/or with substance-use issues is an important first step, but will only be effective if the information collected triggers a deployment of this resource. The 9-1-1 process must be expanded to include training of operators to elicit and provide more expansive and real time information to front line officers.

To inform the public on what to expect from the investigation process, we offer the following.


What is required and what to expect from the Philadelphia Police Department:

Existing Philadelphia Police Department protocols dictate that all officers should hold the highest regard for the sanctity of human life, dignity, and liberty of all persons. The application of deadly force is to be employed **only in the most extreme circumstances** and after all lesser means of force have failed or could not be reasonably employed. The Philadelphia Police Department is required to investigate the officers' actions according to protocols which include:

1. Whether or not the discharge results in death or injury to any person, the officer shall be temporarily assigned to non-street duties. The officer(s) will be placed on Administrative Duty Status pending the outcome of the investigation. **Officer(s) involved in this incident should have already been removed from street duty assignment.**

2. The First Supervisor on the scene will be responsible for collecting all body worn cameras (BWCs) with video of the incident and ensure the videos are captured and stored as evidence. The officer involved shooting incident unit will also ensure that any video that captured the incident is obtained, stored, and processed as evidence. **All relevant BWCs should be collected and stored at the time of the shooting.**
3. A member of the Internal Affairs Department Shooting Team interviews the officer(s) that discharged their weapon, separately, within 72 hours of the incident. **The officer(s) interviews should be conducted by Thursday, October 29th 4:00pm.**
4. A press conference will be held by the Police Commissioner or designee within 72 hours of an officer involved shooting. The Information will include the officer's name, years of service, assignment and duty status. **The press conference to release the officer(s) information should be conducted by Thursday, October 29th 4:00pm.**
5. The Officer Involved Shooting Incident (OISI) unit investigates all shootings by law enforcement in Philadelphia. They collect and secure evidence, investigate, and prepare an investigation report to be sent to Internal Affairs within 7 calendar days. **The investigation report should be sent to Internal Affairs by Monday, November 2nd.**
6. A preliminary summary based on the facts collected and confirmed by the investigators will be placed on the Philadelphia Police Department's website in the OIS (Officer Involved Shooting) section of the site.

The Commission will monitor to ensure that appropriate investigations are conducted in a timely fashion and that the Philadelphia Police Department is transparent in its the release of information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Erace', written over a horizontal line.

Anthony Erace
Executive Director
Police Advisory Commission