



APD NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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APD receives Justice Department recommendations

The Austin Police Department announced today that the U.S. Department of Justice has provided recommendations regarding APD policies, procedures, practices and training, specifically those relating to the use of force. The recommendations come as a result of a DOJ review of APD procedures that began the summer of 2007.

APD, the Office of Police Monitor and the City of Austin Law Department are carefully reviewing each recommendation. Police Chief Art Acevedo noted that the letter did not include any mandates, and that many of the recommendations have already been implemented by the Department over the past year.

Policy improvements were put into place upon the appointment of Chief Acevedo and following DOJ informal input after on-site visits by Federal officials in September and November of 2007. In its letter to the City, DOJ expressed its appreciation to the City for its cooperation.

“The Austin Police Department and the City of Austin have fully cooperated and worked closely with the U.S. Department of Justice throughout its review,” Acevedo said. “When areas of improvement were identified in the course of the year, we didn’t wait. We acted. And by doing so, we’ve made our department more responsive to our community.”

During the DOJ’s initial review, APD policies, procedures and training were carefully examined. The Justice Department conducted interviews with City of Austin officials, APD command staff, supervisors, line officers, representatives of the Office of the Police Monitor, Austin Police Association, community leaders and citizens. The DOJ’s primary focus has been to provide APD with technical assistance to enhance practices, training and procedures to ensure compliance with constitutional requirements.



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In 2004, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), represented by the Texas Civil Rights Project, filed a 16-page complaint with the Department of Justice against APD and the City of Austin alleging Austin's African American and Hispanic residents disproportionately subjected to excessive force and abuse of search powers through consent searches.

In 2005, the NAACP supplemented its DOJ complaint with information concerning the use of racially-charged language by ten police officers and employees during a fire at the Midtown Live Nightclub in Northeast Austin. This highly charged incident attracted national attention

In late 2005, the City of Austin sent a letter to the Justice Department formally requesting an independent review. At that time, APD believed that the Federal investigation would assure the community that the department operates in accordance with local, State and Federal law.

The Justice Department is officially continuing its review. The Justice Department has not made a final determination regarding specific use of force incidents currently under review, and may make additional on-site visits in the coming months. Acevedo said APD and the City of Austin will continue to cooperate fully until the DOJ completes its work.

To view a copy of the U.S. Department of justice's technical assistance letter, visit the APD Web site at www.ci.austin.tx.us/police/default.htm.

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