

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS



SUSAN HUTSON
INDEPENDENT POLICE MONITOR

March 14, 2012

Mitchell J. Landrieu, Mayor
City of New Orleans
1300 Perdido St.
New Orleans, LA 70112

Ronal W. Serpas, Superintendent
New Orleans Police Department
715 South Broad Street
New Orleans, LA 70119

RE: Tactical and Warrant Service Training

Dear Mayor Landrieu and Superintendent Serpas:

The IPM observes Officer Involved Shootings (OIS) for evidence control, to monitor the OIS investigations, and to improve public and officer safety by making policy recommendations.

These have been some very rough days for our entire community. It is affecting officer morale and also citizen trust in the police. Therefore, it is urgent that we make these preliminary recommendations before a final investigative outcome.

We write to request that the New Orleans Police Department request immediate training help in the areas of tactics and warrants service from federal sources.

The IPM has had the opportunity to respond to over 20 officer involved shootings over the last year and 10 months. As a result of our exposure, we have grown concerned that New Orleans police officers are engaging in tactics that put themselves and the public in danger.

The following are but a few examples of unsafe tactics that we have observed when we have responded to officer involved shootings:



- A single officer chasing two possibly armed home invasion suspects through abandoned residences/yards in a sparsely populated neighborhood in New Orleans East;
- A single officer leaving his partner and entering, without backup, an abandoned house allegedly containing one armed and one unarmed suspect; and
- An officer walking up to a running vehicle which then struck him as the suspects tried to flee.

It is also important that the NOPD review how it partners with other agencies to serve warrants to ensure that there is a clear division of labor, command, and accountability.

Although the NOPD has not completed the investigations of the two most recent OISs in which members of the public were killed and we have not completed our reviews of those investigations, we are thoroughly examining the officers' tactical choices.

I respectfully suggest that Superintendent Serpas reach out for immediate training assistance to the following law enforcement agencies:

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation for assistance with law enforcement training for safety and survival; and
- The United States Marshal Service and Louisiana State Police for assistance in safe warrant service tactics.

The US Marshal advised that the NOPD's Special Operations Division may also be able to assist in the training of the service of search warrants, as their training is up-to-date with national standards.

We believe that this type of training will keep safety first and foremost in the minds of NOPD officers, which in turn will help keep the public safe as well. Given the events over the last two weeks, the sooner this type of training can be implemented the better, for both officers and the public. Such training should bring officers into greater compliance with national best practices for law enforcement, NOPD's policies, and federal/state law.

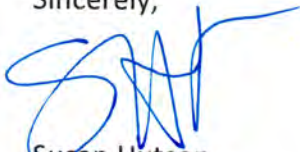
We know that you bear a heavy burden for the people of New Orleans. We appreciate and rely on your leadership in this matter. Certainly we all know how urgently our community needs immediate and concrete intervention in this public safety concern.



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We stand ready to help you in contacting these federal agencies for assistance.

Sincerely,



Susan Hutson
Independent Police Monitor

Cc: E.R. Quatrevaux, Inspector General
J.W. Sneed, Deputy Mayor for Public Safety

