



For Immediate Release

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Washington State Patrol Independent Investigation Team (IIT)

Olympia-WSP IIT is sending out this release as the required update regarding the independent investigation into the death of Mr. Manuel Ellis. Mr. Ellis died while in the custody of Tacoma Police Department on March 03, 2020.

In September of this year, the Washington State Office of the Attorney General (AG) requested the Washington State Patrol (WSP) to officially conduct forensic investigative efforts narrowly focused on a cell phone found at the scene. This request was approved by the Chief of the WSP, and the IIT was reconvened.

Additional administrative processes are legally required prior to a WSP forensic examination of the cell phone. A timeline for these processes is still being determined and therefore the WSP will close the formal investigation while awaiting that determination. Should the need arise for further WSP investigatory efforts, the case will be reopened.

With the passage of [Washington State Initiative 940](#) in 2018, and [Substitute House Bill 1064](#) in 2019, incidents where the use of deadly force by a peace officer results in death, substantial bodily harm, or great bodily harm require an independent investigation. This investigation must be conducted in the same manner as a criminal investigation and state law now requires an "independent investigation" completely independent of the involved agency.

This update is required in compliance with WAC 139-12, which mandates weekly updates be sent out by the lead investigative agency in investigations where a Washington State Peace Officer uses deadly force in the capacity of his or her law enforcement duties. These updates are required even if no new information is available at the time of the update. Weekly updates will resume when and if the case is reopened in the future.

The policies and operating procedures of the IIT are available to the public at: <https://www.wsp.wa.gov/about-us/our-mission/> or directly at: <https://www.wsp.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CID-IIT-Protocol.pdf>

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