

Officers' videos of shooting shown sooner - - Albuquerque Journal (NM) - January 17, 2018 - page A2

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Albuquerque police on Tuesday showed reporters lapel camera videos of officers fatally shooting a man armed with a knife and pipe, while the lieutenant overseeing an investigation into the event provided a play-by-play account of the first police shooting under the new city administration.

Interim Police Chief Michael Geier said during the briefing that he plans to follow a similar practice — releasing videos to the public and having news conferences about the incidents — in the event of future police shootings.

Videos will be released promptly after all the involved officers and witnesses have been interviewed, regardless of how “favorable” the videos may be to police, Geier said.

Several hours of video recordings from the events that led to the shooting will be made publicly available today, but the police played portions showing critical pieces of the recordings during a news conference Tuesday.

“I mentioned accountability. This (video) is obviously probably more favorable to police, just from first impressions,” Geier said at the news conference, the first covering a police shooting since he took over Dec. 1. “Sometimes (the videos) are questionable. It’s our stance that you’ll see something like this (a news conference) and you’ll get the videos as well.”

The startling video shown on Tuesday showed a team of four officers enter a vacant apartment building on East Central when **Daniel Saavedra-Arreola**, 24, jumped from a closet and started swinging a pipe and a knife at officers within the confines of a small bedroom. One officer jumped out of the way of the man as another officer fired a Taser, which was ineffective. Then all four officers fired their weapons about 17 times total, fatally wounding the man.

With the promise that videos of police shootings will be made public relatively early on during an investigation, the chief has taken a stance on a hot-button topic in Albuquerque and around the country.

The Albuquerque Police Department is currently involved in a years-long U.S. Department of Justice reform effort that aims to address, in part, a large number of police shootings. And two Albuquerque police officers in 2016 were tried but not convicted on murder charges for an on-duty shooting, with video as a key part of the evidence.

Around the country, some law enforcement agencies have faced criticism, or had officers charged with crimes, as a result of on-body camera video. But there’s not a clear standard or practice of when videos made by police officers become public records. Different departments have different

policies.

Albuquerque police under Chief Gorden Eden, who held the position from February 2014 until Geier took over, released some videos within days of shootings but waited more than a year to release other controversial videos.

The briefing on Tuesday featured other details on the recent police shooting — the type that weren't commonly shared under the prior police administration.

Lt. Ray Del Greco of APD's Force Investigative Team walked the media through the events that transpired that night.

His briefing included discussing some of the plans and tactics the officers used when they arrived on scene, and arranging tables in a police conference room and referencing blueprints to show the size of the room that officers found themselves in when they encountered Saavedra-Arreola.

Del Greco said investigators plan to finish the investigation and submit it to the district attorney within 70 days for a review.

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