

Family questions fatal shooting of Copper Center - Anchorage Daily News (AK) - July 6, 2018

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A Copper Center man died early Friday after one or more Alaska state troopers shot him while investigating a domestic-violence call.

Eric Hash, 38, was shot at about 3:15 a.m., according to a troopers alert.

The Department of Public Safety has not said how many troopers fired at Hash, whether he had a weapon or threatened troopers, or specifically what led to the shooting.

Meanwhile, members of Hash's family harshly criticized the trooper response. They said Hash was unarmed and was not being violent. A Public Safety Department spokesman said more information about the shooting would be released Monday.

Troopers said they received a report at 2:34 a.m. that Hash was assaulting a 72-year-old relative and frightening other family members in the Richardson Highway community about 12 miles south of Glennallen.

"While (AST) was en route to the incident, it was reported that Hash had left but then returned to the residence and family members barricaded themselves for safety as Hash was yelling at them and damaging property," the statement said. "AST responded and made contact with Hash."

Troopers then fired on Hash, the statement said. "Hash was medevaced but succumbed to his injuries at the hospital," the troopers statement said.

Carlene Pete, Hash's sister, provided a statement Friday night from the family.

It said Hash was close to family but recently started drinking heavily after two brothers and a niece died.

The statement said he smelled of alcohol during the assault and was uncharacteristically belligerent. But he didn't hit anyone, it said.

Neighbors said it was a short time between a trooper's arrival and the shooting, the statement said.

"They feel like the time between arrival and the shots fired was so close that the trooper did not put forth adequate effort to deescalate the situation before killing Eric," the family said.

"As a family we are not excusing Eric's behavior last night, but none of his behavior justified being shot to death," the family said.

The family said it hopes to review footage from officer body cameras.

Jonathon Taylor, a spokesman with the Department of Public Safety, said the agency doesn't provide troopers with body cameras.

Taylor said the Alaska Bureau of Investigations, the major investigative branch of the Department of Public Safety, will conduct a thorough review. Results will be forwarded to the Office of Special Prosecutions in the Department of Law.

The office will determine whether the trooper, or troopers, were justified in discharging their weapons, he said.

A precise timeline, and what happened moment-by-moment, will be established as part of the investigation, he said.

"We won't rush the investigation by any means. We take it very, very seriously," he said.

Hash's body will be transported to the Alaska medical examiner's office for an autopsy, troopers said Friday morning.

The trooper or troopers who fired their weapons were placed on a mandatory 72-hour administrative leave.

Megan Peters, a spokeswoman with the troopers, declined to answer questions about the incident Friday, including how many times Hash was shot and how many troopers were placed on leave. In later interviews, Public Safety and troopers spokesman Taylor also declined to specifically address the version of events provided by Hash's family, saying the investigation was still underway.

The incident is the fourth trooper-involved shooting this year, Peters said. It was the second such shooting in a week, after a North Pole man, Garry Lawrence Jr. was shot and killed Friday after threatening troopers with an axe.

A man was killed in each of the four shootings.

[Daylong Pilot Stations standoff ends with man dead.]

[Troopers fatally shoot Nikolaevsk man.]

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