

City of Davis

Independent Police Auditor Report:

Allegation: DPD Failed to Appropriately Respond to Loud Music Call

December 2023

Independent Police Auditor
Michael Gennaco





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Factual Background

The complainant alleged that when she called 911 to report a loud music call with “gang type of sounding music”, the dispatcher advised her that this was not a call that warranted using the emergency line. The complainant further reported that an officer subsequently called her and said he did not see anyone in the parking lot from which the music was coming and that there are no known gang members in Davis at the current time.

DPD Investigation and Outcome

DPD leadership reviewed the tape recording of the 911 call and the related paperwork and noted that while advising the complainant that the noise complaint was not an emergency call, nonetheless, left her on the emergency line, took the information, and dispatched an officer but no one was located making the reported noise.

In reviewing the complaint, DPD agreed with the dispatcher that 911 is not the appropriate number to call for a noise complaint. In its letter to the complainant, an “emergency” means any condition in which emergency services will result in the saving of a life, a reduction in the destruction of property, quicker apprehension of criminals, or assistance with potentially life-threatening medical problems, a fire, a need for rescue, an imminent potential crime, or a similar situation in which immediate assistance is needed. The letter further advised that noise complaints, by their very nature, are minor nuisances.

In determining that the allegation was unfounded, the letter further explained that while the complainant may have been frightened and believed the persons were gang members, there was nothing about the reported conduct that constituted an emergency. DPD further advised that the type of music that was being played was not indicative of gang involvement and that the Department could not interpret it as such. DPD then provided a non-emergency number for noise complaints.

IPA Review and Analysis

We reviewed the materials relevant to this incident, including the 911 phone conversation between the dispatcher and the complainant. We concurred with the determination reached by DPD. The dispatcher was initially somewhat brusque when she informed the complainant that the noise complaint did not qualify as an emergency, but was professional as she took the information and completed the call.