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Fairness and Consistency in the Chicago Police Department's Relief of Police Powers

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Fairness and Consistency in the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) Relief of Police Powers

This inquiry examined CPD's practice of relieving, or "stripping," members of police powers, limiting their duties and removing them from public-facing roles while misconduct investigations are pending.

OIG found



Inconsistent *Practices*

CPD consistently strips members who are arrested, but not for other conduct fitting its stated criteria; limited guidance may contribute to the risk of inconsistency.



Risk of *Delays*

CPD lacks procedures to review cases involving stripped members and does not always notify the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) when members are stripped, risking delays in restoration of powers.



Lack of *Transparency*

CPD's guidance is limited and internal to the Bureau of Internal Affairs; members reported that they were unaware of criteria for conduct warranting stripping and that decisions felt arbitrary or political.



Hindered *Oversight*

CPD's failure to document its recommendations and rationale in relieving police powers prevents an evaluation of fairness and consistency in stripping decisions.



Stripping police powers for CPD members accused of serious misconduct:

- safeguards CPD's credibility;
- protects the public from additional harm;
- limits members' ability to work overtime and receive promotions; and
- can be distressing for members.

Accordingly, CPD must balance its obligations to public safety and accountability with the personal and professional costs to stripped members.

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Acronyms

ARS	Alternate Response Section
BIA	Bureau of Internal Affairs
CLEAR	Citizen Law Enforcement Analysis and Reporting
CMS	Case Management System
COPA	Civilian Office of Police Accountability
CPD	Chicago Police Department
DUI	Driving Under the Influence
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
FOP	Fraternal Order of Police
IAD	Internal Affairs Division
ILETSB	Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board
IPRA	Independent Police Review Authority
MCC	Municipal Code of Chicago
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OPSA	Office of Public Safety Administration
RSO	Returning Service Officer

I | Executive Summary

The Public Safety section of the Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an inquiry into the process for relieving, or “stripping,” police powers of sworn Chicago Police Department (CPD or the Department) members in connection with allegations of misconduct. Relieving a member of their police powers and placing them in an administrative assignment while they are under investigation can be a safeguard against additional misconduct and damage to the Department’s reputation and credibility. However, OIG also identified that CPD members who are stripped of their police powers can experience a range of personal and professional consequences. In exercising its authority to strip members of their police powers during the pendency of a misconduct investigation, CPD must balance its obligations for public safety and accountability with the costs to relieved CPD members. The objectives of this inquiry included examining the policies, processes, and controls the Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA) and the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) have in place for recommending the relief or restoration of police powers during the pendency of misconduct investigations. OIG also analyzed the Department’s criteria for relief of police powers and the consistency with which members were ultimately relieved.

OIG found that CPD has limited guidance for seeking the relief of police powers during the pendency of misconduct investigations and consistently relieves police powers when members are arrested but has not for other conduct fitting its stated criteria (see Finding 1A). OIG further found that CPD lacks procedural controls, such as periodic reviews, for cases in which members remain relieved for prolonged periods and provides little communication to members regarding the status of their cases (Finding 1B). Lastly, OIG found that CPD only keeps record of cases where members were ultimately relieved of police powers. CPD does not document all cases in which relief of police powers was considered or recommended, nor the Superintendent’s decision and accompanying rationale, limiting any analysis of the fairness and consistency of the practice (Finding 1C).

With respect to the Department, OIG concludes that CPD’s lack of policy and documentation regarding the relief of police powers during misconduct investigations risks delays and inconsistency in its application, prevents oversight of the practice, and erodes members’ confidence in the process. To improve transparency for members and reduce the risk of unfairness or inconsistency, OIG recommends that CPD adopt policies governing the relief of members’ police powers (Recommendation 1) and provide correspondence for all accused members pending investigation, including those relieved of their police powers, as required by existing Department policy and the consent decree (Recommendation 6). OIG further recommends that CPD provide guidance for BIA investigators to conduct periodic reviews of pending misconduct investigations of CPD members relieved of police powers to ensure timely restoration of police powers where appropriate and applicable (Recommendation 2). OIG also recommends that CPD review and revise its criteria for the relief of police powers, particularly to determine whether to include allegations of false reports (Recommendation 3), and that the Department document in its electronic case management system (CMS) all recommendations to relieve police powers along with the Superintendent’s decision and rationale (Recommendation 4). OIG additionally recommends that CPD standardize the information provided to members at the time of Notice of Duty Restriction, such as creating informational materials about the impact that being relieved of police powers might have on employee benefits and the resources and support services available to members (Recommendation 5) and consider ways to continue and increase the accessibility of support services for stripped members (Recommendation 7). Finally, to assist with COPA’s

monitoring efforts, OIG recommends that CPD should promptly notify COPA of any CPD member relieved of police powers (Recommendation 8).

Regarding COPA's role in the relief of police powers process, OIG found that COPA has made relatively few recommendations to relieve police powers and that its policy only requires the consideration of recommending relief of police powers for Major Case Incidents. While COPA's policy requires it to monitor any relief of police powers recommendations it makes to CPD, OIG found that COPA does not fully comply with this obligation. COPA does not monitor all investigations involving relieved CPD members, hindered in part by a lack of communication from CPD. OIG recommends that COPA consider and document its consideration of recommending relief of police powers in Major Case Incidents, as required by existing COPA policy (Recommendation 9). Additionally, OIG recommends that COPA document any consideration given to recommending the relief of police powers in its investigations in its electronic case management system (Recommendation 10) and provide timely and substantive investigative status updates to accused members, as required by existing COPA policy and Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC) § 2-78-135 (Recommendation 12). Lastly, OIG recommends that COPA document and complete a monthly review of all recommendations for relief of police powers made to CPD, as required in COPA policy (Recommendation 11).

The relief of police powers, when implemented fairly and transparently, can serve as an effective and appropriate safeguard for public safety and to uphold public trust in CPD. If the Department relieves members of police powers during misconduct investigations in a way which either is or is perceived to be inconsistent or unjustified, however, it jeopardizes the legitimacy of the process and the police disciplinary system at large. Therefore, CPD must administer its relief of police powers in a consistent and transparent way while balancing its obligations for public safety and accountability with the costs to relieved CPD members.

II | Background

According to the Chicago Police Department's (CPD or the Department) Standards of Conduct, "[a] police officer is the most conspicuous representative of government, and to the majority of the people...a symbol of stability and authority upon whom they can rely." It further states, "[s]ince the conduct of a member, on or off duty, does reflect directly upon the Department, a member must at all times conduct [themselves] in a manner which does not bring discredit to [the individual], the Department, or the city."¹

To uphold public safety and public trust, in certain situations, CPD may relieve (i.e., "strip") a sworn member of their police powers. Relief of police powers removes a sworn CPD member's ability to exercise powers specific to a sworn law enforcement officer, such as the power of arrest, and prohibits members from additional acts such as carrying a firearm, wearing a badge, testifying in court unless subpoenaed, or driving Department vehicles.² Consequently, relieved CPD members are typically assigned to so-called desk duties. Although CPD members are sometimes relieved of police powers for administrative reasons, such as failure to adhere to conditions of employment (e.g., failure to maintain a valid driver's license), often they are relieved in relation to allegations of misconduct. According to statements from Department leadership, CPD may relieve accused members of their police powers to protect both the public and the Department. CPD leadership reported that they strip members accused of actions which may bring discredit to the Department or damage the public trust as well as members accused of serious offenses which may result in termination from CPD.

While being relieved of police powers changes a CPD member's regular day-to-day assignment, it is not a formal disciplinary penalty. Rather, it is a restriction to a member's duty status, typically imposed while a disciplinary investigation is ongoing and removed once the investigation is completed and discipline is issued. Because misconduct investigations can take years to reach a conclusion, the length of time that CPD members are relieved of police powers ranges from several months to several years.

A | Relief of Police Powers Process and Actors

The Superintendent of Police has the authority to relieve any sworn member of their police powers.³ Additionally, CPD's Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA) and the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA), which investigate allegations of misconduct by CPD members, may recommend relief of police powers to the Superintendent for a member who is the subject of an administrative or criminal investigation within their respective jurisdictions.⁴ An investigating agency's recommendation for relief of police powers may be made at any point in an investigation.

¹ Chicago Police Department, "Rules and Regulations of the Chicago Police Department," Section I.B.5., April 16, 2015, accessed March 28, 2025, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6412>.

² The relieved member is not allowed to carry a firearm or any other weapon. CPD's relief of police powers process does not include the physical surrender of weapons because members' duty weapons are owned by individual members, not by the Department.

³ Acknowledgement of CPD's practice of relieving members of their police powers can be seen in collective bargaining contracts dating back to 1981. Chicago Police Department, "General Order G08-01: Complaint and Disciplinary System," December 29, 2023, accessed September 16, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6362>.

⁴ Although OIG may submit recommendations to relieve members of their police powers, in keeping with the objectivity and independence standards governing OIG's work, OIG does not evaluate its own role in the relief of powers process within this inquiry.

Superintendent of Police

While leadership within BIA and COPA may make *recommendations* to relieve members of their police powers, the Superintendent of Police has the ultimate authority to relieve members of their powers. CPD's "General Order G08-01: Complaint and Disciplinary System" states, "[t]he Superintendent of Police retains the discretion to restrict the duties of sworn Department members in response to complaints."⁵

CPD reported to OIG that, generally, the Department will relieve police powers in serious misconduct cases that, if sustained, would likely result in separation of the member or a significant penalty. The Department may also relieve members to prevent the risk of further misconduct or damage to public trust in the Department. For example, at an April 2024 news conference regarding an officer-involved shooting, Superintendent Larry Snelling stated that the Department may "take action" to address members who have multiple complaints levied against them. Superintendent Snelling stated that along with training and counseling, "removing that officer from the street for a while" is one recourse available to the Department.⁶

Further, the Superintendent may also keep a member relieved of their police powers, even after the conclusion of their misconduct investigation. In 2016, an arbitrator determined that the Superintendent's decision to keep members relieved of their police powers, even after their misconduct investigation was closed, was an exercise of management discretion so long as it was not arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory.

Bureau of Internal Affairs

BIA is an internal CPD unit devoted to investigating allegations of misconduct by sworn and nonsworn CPD members. BIA is led by a Chief who reports directly to the Superintendent of Police and is responsible for "coordinat[ing] and exercis[ing] supervision over disciplinary matters involving alleged or suspected violations of statutes, ordinances, and Department rules and directives."⁷ BIA conducts both administrative misconduct investigations and criminal investigations of CPD members.

Internal BIA guidance, a Departmental Memorandum from the Bureau of Professional Standards (B.P.S. 08-146) dated May 2008, states:

A Department member who is the subject of a [log number] investigation may be relieved of their police powers and re-assigned to a less sensitive position pending the outcome of the complaint investigation. Examples of circumstances under which a Department member may be relieved of police powers include, but are not limited to, incidents involving:

1. Members who have been placed under physical arrest;
2. Members who have been formally indicted by a grand jury;
3. Members who exhibit behavior indicative of apparent psychological or emotional impairment;

⁵ Chicago Police Department, "General Order G08-01: Complaint and Disciplinary System."

⁶ Heather Cherone, "Top Cop Says CPD Tracks Accusations Against Officers," *WTTW*, April 17, 2024, <https://news.wttw.com/2024/04/17/top-cop-says-cpd-tracks-accusations-against-officers-took-no-action-after-36-complaints>.

⁷ Chicago Police Department, "General Order G01-02-02: Organization and Functions of the Bureau of Internal Affairs," May 11, 2023, accessed September 16, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6612>.

4. Members who test positive for drug use or abuse;
5. Members who fail to submit to random, or for cause, urine testing for drug abuse;
6. Members who are alleged to have committed a felony, crime involving moral turpitude, or act of physical violence;
7. Members required to undergo a mandatory physical or psychological examination;
8. Members who refuse to submit to a mandatory physical or psychological examination;
9. Members subject to a court order, such as an order of protection or as a condition of bond, which precludes the possession or use of a firearm or dangerous weapon; and
10. Other reasons determined to be in the best interest of the member or the Department.⁸

A BIA supervisor stated that initiating the relief of police powers is typically “cut and dry,” meaning that relief of police powers is certain for specific allegations and provided examples such as members driving under the influence (DUI), getting arrested, or testing positive for drugs as circumstances under which relief of powers is always initiated. Separately, BIA provided the example of drinking on-duty as a type of allegation for which the decision to relieve police powers is determined by leadership on a case-by-case basis, with the Superintendent having final approval.

Civilian Office of Police Accountability

COPA is a civilian-led City agency that is independent of the Chicago Police Department and headed by a Chief Administrator. Pursuant to its enabling ordinance, Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC) § 2-78-120, COPA has jurisdiction to conduct misconduct investigations of CPD members for allegations including domestic violence, sexual misconduct, excessive force, coercion, verbal abuse, and improper search or seizure.⁹ COPA also investigates instances where a CPD member discharges a firearm or other weapon, where a person in custody dies or sustains serious bodily injury, as well as any CPD member-involved death.¹⁰

COPA’s policy, “Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers,” provides considerations for determining whether to recommend that CPD relieve a member of police powers during an investigation. According to the policy, the Chief Administrator may recommend the restriction of duties or powers if “after reviewing all available allegations and evidence, and considering the reliability and strength of such evidence,” it is determined that:

1. continued police duties or powers for the officer presents a threat to the community, the Department, and/or the officer; or
2. COPA is likely to recommend that the officer be separated from employment with the Department.¹¹

⁸ Chicago Police Department, “Bureau of Professional Standards B.P.S. 08-146: Relieving Department Members of Police Powers,” May 21, 2008.

⁹ City of Chicago, Municipal Code, § 2-78-120.

¹⁰ City of Chicago, Municipal Code, § 2-78-120. According to CPD policy, members who discharge a firearm, other than unintentional discharges or solely for the destruction/deterrence of an animal where no person was injured, are automatically placed on administrative duty status for a minimum of thirty days. Chicago Police Department, “General Order G03-02-03: Firearm Discharge Incidents – Authorized Use and Post-Discharge Administrative Procedures,” June 28, 2023, accessed September 16, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6755>.

¹¹ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers,” June 24, 2021, 3, accessed September 16, 2024, https://www.chicagocopa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/COPA-Policy_Powers-and-Duties_FINAL_2021-06-24.pdf.

COPA policy also outlines “considerations in assessing the appropriateness of a recommendation to restrict the duties or powers of a Department member.”¹² The policy states that these considerations include, but are not limited to:

1. The likelihood that the behavior under investigation will continue in the absence of restrictions on the duties or powers of the Department member.
2. The availability of independent and corroborating evidence of misconduct to support a recommendation for separation.
3. The extent to which, if left unaddressed, the Department member’s public visibility and presence will undermine the Department’s efforts to serve the public.
4. A review of any mitigating or aggravating factors, to include prior disciplinary history.¹³

In public statements, COPA has emphasized that it is not the entity that relieves CPD members of their police powers, but rather that it makes such recommendations to the Department. For example, at a February 2024 Police Board hearing, COPA’s then-Chief Administrator stated that COPA only has the power to recommend that the Department relieve members of their powers and, in reference to a high-profile case featured in COPA’s People’s Academy curriculum, the Chief Administrator clarified, “COPA didn’t strip him of his police powers either, then-Superintendent Johnson did.”¹⁴

Office of Public Safety Administration

The Office of Public Safety Administration (OPSA) is a City agency that “handle[s] the paperwork” and provides administrative and technical support to the City’s public safety entities, including CPD.¹⁵ When the Superintendent decides to relieve a member of their police powers, BIA completes the “Notification of Duty Restriction (Sworn Member)” form and the member reports to OPSA for processing (see Figure 1 below). OPSA collects the member’s uniform star and shield, and CPD identification card.¹⁶ If it is determined that a member will have their police powers restored, BIA issues a Release of Duty Restrictions form. OPSA then processes the reinstatement of the member, notifying the member’s current unit of assignment, reissuing the member’s equipment, and collecting the provided temporary identification card.

¹² Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers.”

¹³ COPA policy also includes considerations for specific restrictions which might be deemed necessary, such as the explicit need to prohibit members from carrying firearms or exercise their arrest powers. Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers.”

¹⁴ Chicago Police Board, “Public Meeting,” February 22, 2024, accessed April 12, 2024, 57:05-57:10, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-DWsxwEeN0>.

COPA’s People’s Academy is a six-week course available to the public which provides attendees with information on COPA’s processes and investigative practices. Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “COPA People’s Academy,” accessed November 24, 2025, <https://www.chicagocopa.org/community-outreach/copa-peoples-academy/>.

¹⁵ City of Chicago Office of Public Safety Administration, “Office of Public Safety Administration,” accessed April 5, 2024, <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/opsa.html>.

¹⁶ Sworn CPD members are required to carry their CPD identification card and wear their prescribed Chicago Police Star while in uniform. A shield is a metal plate featuring the Chicago seal and Department identifier, and is worn on a member’s round crown cap.

Figure 1: CPD Form 44.301 “Notification of Duty Restrictions (Sworn Members)”

Pending the conclusion of the investigation of this Log Number and based on the authority vested in me by the Superintendent of Police, you are hereby directed and expressly ordered by me as follows:

(CHECK APPLICABLE BOX(ES) AND HAVE THE ACCUSED INITIAL IN THE SPACE FOLLOWING EACH BOX)

- 1. You are not to carry a firearm or any other weapon.
- 2. If so ordered by the courts to surrender firearms, it is your responsibility to immediately make arrangements to surrender any firearms in your possession.
- 3. You are not to exercise the power of arrest or any other police power bestowed upon you by virtue of your employment as a sworn member of the Chicago Police Department.
- 4. You are to surrender your Chicago Police Star, Shield and Identification Card as directed.
- 5. You are not to drive or operate any Departmental Transportation Equipment which will include but not be limited to: motor vehicle, watercraft, bicycle, or any electronic powered transportation equipment except as directed by your Commanding Officer.
- 6. You are not to attend or testify in any court in the capacity of a Chicago Police Officer unless subpoenaed.
- 7. You are to obey any orders given by any supervisor of the Chicago Police Department.
- 8. If incarcerated or held over to bond you will be carried in a no-pay status until you notify your unit of assignment of your choice to use elective or compensatory time.
- 9. You will report to (unit) _____ on _____, 2 _____ at _____ (hours) as ordered.
- 10. _____

Source: CPD 44.301 Notification of Duty Restrictions (Sworn Members)¹⁷

Assignment While Relieved of Police Powers

Due to the restrictions placed on a member relieved of their powers, they are unable to hold traditional work assignments, such as responding to calls for service, patrolling Districts and Beats, and conducting traffic or investigatory stops. Instead, members are often reassigned to work in administrative, non-public facing roles such as within the Alternate Response Section (ARS). Members assigned to this unit are responsible for taking non-emergency calls for police service from the Office of Emergency Management and Communications’ 311 service and completing any related police reports over the phone.

Reinstatement of Members

As necessary, the process for reinstating members whose powers have been relieved is governed by CPD directives and BIA’s administrative policies. According to BIA’s Administrative Directive 2022-A001, “Reinstatement of Members Relieved of Police Powers,” effective January 2022, duty restrictions are typically rescinded once it is determined that separation charges will not be pursued. This directive indicates that its investigators are responsible for monitoring any court cases involving relieved members and must act promptly if the outcome favors reinstatement. The directive further emphasizes that investigators should recommend restoration, “only if separation is NOT inevitable due to other allegations” (emphasis in original). BIA leadership reported to OIG that BIA investigators are encouraged to frequently review cases involving relieved members, ensuring that the decision to restore powers is consistent with the investigation’s progression. There is, however, no mandated frequency for these reviews (see Finding 1 for more information). BIA leadership stated that members who are relieved during the pendency of a misconduct investigation should have their powers restored once it becomes clear that separation will not be pursued while acknowledging that this may not happen in every case, with some members being

¹⁷ Chicago Police Department, “CPD 44.301 Notification of Duty Restrictions (Sworn Members),” August 2016, accessed September 23, 2020, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-44.301.pdf>.

reinstated later in the process, or in rare instances, remaining stripped beyond the investigation's conclusion (see Background).

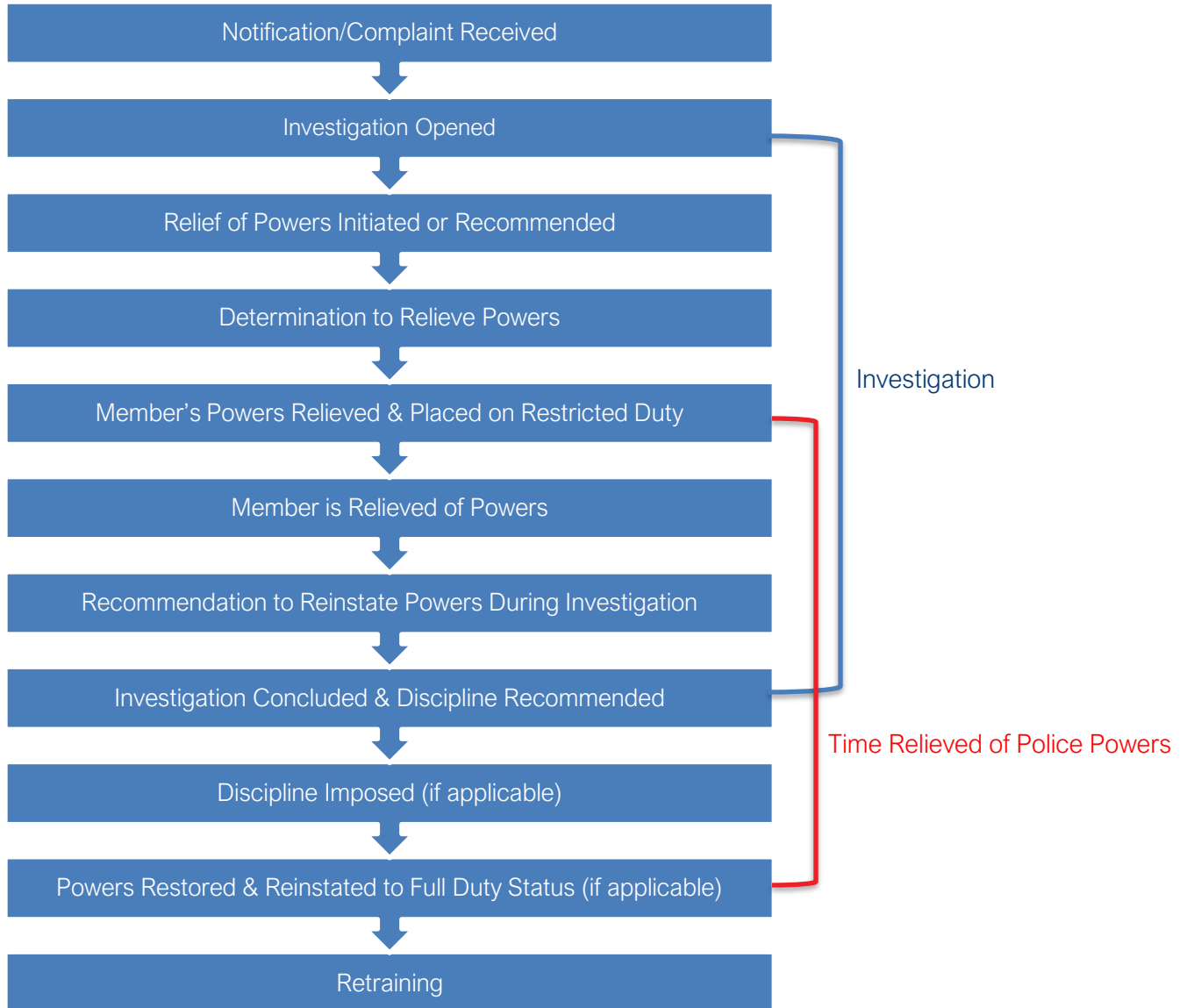
OPSA leadership reported that the restoration process can take up to two weeks and may require members to obtain a medical examination and drug test. Notably, members who are relieved for fewer than 30 days may experience a speedier restoration process of one to two days. Members who are "inactive"—such as those on a stress-related leave of absence—for more than 30 days, regardless of the reason, are required to undergo an updated physical exam, be fingerprinted, pass a drug test, and verify that their FOID card and driver's license are valid. Members who are relieved of their police powers but remain "active" (e.g., assigned to ARS as a 311-call taker), are not required to go through the Medical Services Section for reinstatement.

Per CPD Directive "Employee Resource E04-05: Returning Service Officer Program," members who have been on a leave of absence for more than 30 days must participate in "Returning Service Officer (RSO) Training," but there is no mention of members relieved of police powers in an active work assignment.¹⁸ Former OPSA leadership reported to OIG that members relieved of police powers for a year or more would also return for re-training at the Academy. OIG spoke with CPD members previously relieved of their police powers, who reported that the topics included in re-training, or "retread," for stripped members were dependent on if and what changes to laws, policies, or technology had occurred while the member was relieved.

Below, Figure 2 outlines the process for the relief of police powers related to misconduct investigations by BIA or COPA.

¹⁸ Chicago Police Department, "Employee Resource E04-05: Returning Service Officer Program," June 27, 2024, accessed September 16, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6871>. The previous version of this directive mandated training for members returning from leaves of absence lasting one year or more.

Figure 2: Relief of Police Powers Steps During the Pendency of a Misconduct Investigation¹⁹



Source: OIG Analysis

B | CPD’s Records on Relief of Police Powers

In response to a request from OIG, on March 7, 2023, BIA provided records listing incidents in which members had been relieved of police powers. The Department has documented relief of powers instances in a spreadsheet since May 2009, some of which originated as early as September 2004. The provided list does not include records for relief of police powers instances that had concluded prior to CPD’s creation of the list in May 2009. Below, OIG summarizes the records as provided by BIA. OIG did not independently verify all information captured in the records

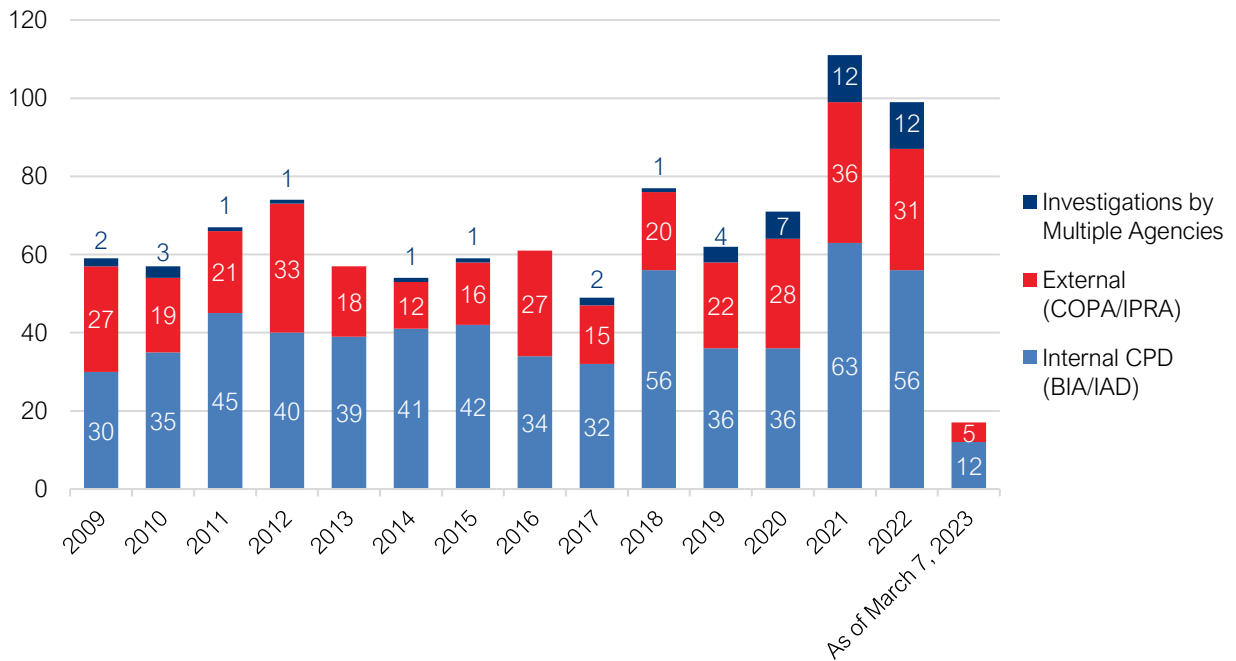
¹⁹ In connection to this inquiry, CPD reported that some of these steps may happen in quick succession. For example, when BIA responds to the scene of an incident involving a CPD member, its notice of the incident through the determination to relieve a member’s powers may occur within several hours. See Finding 1A for more detail.

provided. Additionally, because CPD’s Case Management System (CMS) for misconduct investigations does not track whether an investigation involved the relief of police powers, OIG could not systematically examine such instances using electronic case files. OIG matched the BIA-provided stripping records with employee records from the Chicago Integrated Personnel and Payroll Systems in order to conduct demographic analyses.

Total Relief of Powers Instances

According to BIA’s records, there were a total of 1,092 relief of police powers instances involving 1,018 unique CPD members from May 2009 to March 2023. Figure 3 below shows the number of members relieved in each year since 2009.

Figure 3: Relief of Police Power Instances by Year and Investigating Agency²⁰



Source: OIG Analysis of BIA records

These 1,092 stripping instances include 63 members (6.2%) relieved of their police powers multiple times, specifically: 53 members were relieved of police powers twice, 9 members were relieved three times, and 1 member was relieved on four separate occasions. Of the 10 members who were relieved three or more times, 6 members had at least one allegation related to alcohol use.²¹ Of the 63 members stripped multiple times, as of March 7, 2023, 23 members (36.5%) had been separated in connection with an investigation during which their police powers were relieved.²²

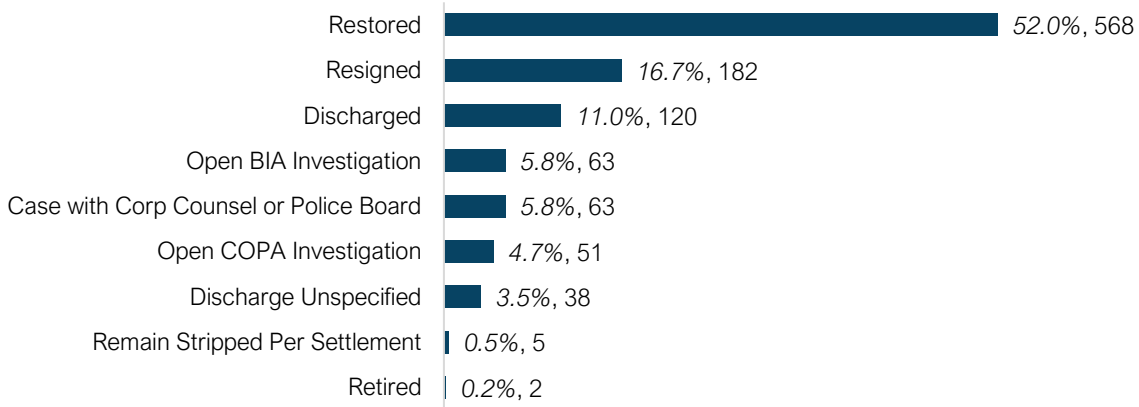
²⁰ BIA was formerly known as the Internal Affairs Division (IAD) and COPA was preceded by the Independent Police Review Authority (IPRA). The listed investigating agency does not necessarily indicate the agency that initiated or recommended the relief of police powers. The count for 2009 includes any member relieved of their police powers in May 2009 or later. This count therefore would not include members relieved and restored to full duty prior to May 2009, but would include members relieved on a previous date who remained relieved as of May 2009. Additionally, the investigating agency is reported from a manually maintained field within BIA’s spreadsheet.

²¹ Similarly, BIA’s Deputy Chief reported to OIG that relieving a member of their police powers is always done for DUIs (see Finding 1).

²² Twelve investigations for members with multiple stripping instances had not concluded as of March 7, 2023.

The majority of relief of police powers instances, 568 (52.0%), concluded in restoration of the member’s police powers. In 342 cases (31%), the stripping instance concluded in the relieved member’s separation from CPD, either by resignation or discharge. This includes at least 182 members who voluntarily left the Department while they were relieved of their powers.²³ The number of relief of powers instances resulting in the involuntary discharge of the member is between 120 (11.0%) and 158 (14.5%); the list provided by BIA is missing details on the termination of employment for 38 members.

Figure 4: Status as of March 7, 2023, for All Relief of Police Powers Instances since May 2009



Source: OIG Analysis of BIA records

Relief of Police Powers Status, Unit of Assignment, and Allegation Type

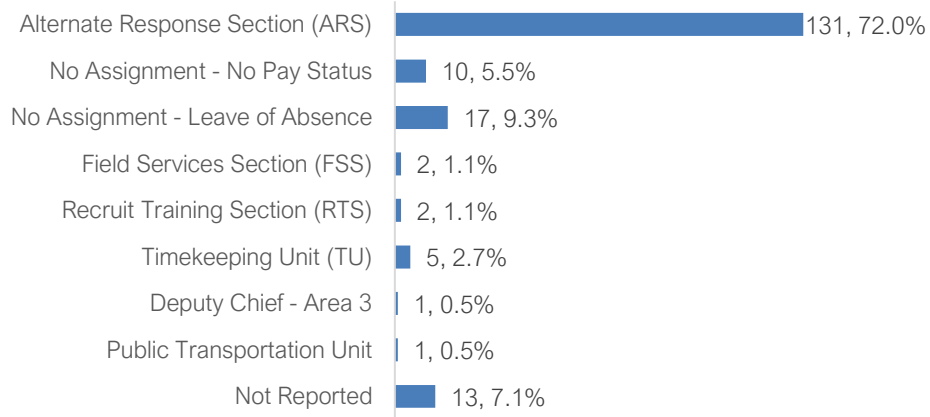
According to BIA data, 182 CPD members were relieved of their police powers as of March 7, 2023. This included five instances in which the misconduct investigations from which relief of powers arose had concluded but the accused members remained relieved under the terms of settlement agreements, and 177 instances in which the underlying misconduct investigations had not yet concluded.²⁴ Of the members relieved of police powers at the time, 131 (72.0%) were detailed to ARS.

²³ Members who are separated, resign, or retire during the course of an investigation may be subject to decertification by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board. See Appendix A for more information on the law enforcement certification status for these 342 members and potential concerns regarding CPD’s disciplinary record keeping.

²⁴ In some cases, the applicable police union and CPD may resolve a disciplinary grievance by agreeing to terms that are memorialized within a settlement agreement.

In September 2016, an arbitrator ruled that CPD’s Superintendent may keep members whose disciplinary cases did not result in separation relieved of their police powers so long as the decision is not arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory.

Figure 5: Unit of Assignment for Members Relieved of Police Powers as of March 7, 2023



Source: OIG Analysis of BIA Records

Of the 182 members who were relieved of their police powers at the time OIG received the BIA records, over a quarter of the members (26.9%) had an allegation of Domestic Violence or Sexual Misconduct, and nearly a quarter (23.1%) were under investigation for allegations related to drug or alcohol use (see Figure 9, page 25).

Length of Time CPD Members are Relieved of Police Powers

The Department of Justice’s 2017 pattern and practice investigation of CPD revealed that “CPD and IPRA [Independent Police Review Authority, COPA’s predecessor] delays in completing misconduct and force investigations were one of the first and most frequent complaints we heard from officers. . . . Accused officers who have not engaged in misconduct are burdened with the scrutiny of being under investigation, and may be stuck doing ‘desk duty’ for years while investigations languish. . . . [and] careers [are] put on hold.”²⁵ Of the 177 misconduct cases not yet concluded as of March 7, 2023, there were two instances of members who had been relieved of police powers since 2014, one instance of a member relieved since 2016, one instance of a member relieved since 2017, three instances of members relieved since 2018, and 11 instances of members relieved since 2019. Among the concluded relief of police powers instances resulting in restoration of duties, members were stripped for a median period of nearly 10 months.²⁶ Yet among the concluded stripping instances resulting in the discharge from employment, members were relieved of police powers for a median period of nearly two years.²⁷

Figure 7 below depicts the percentage of concluded relief of police powers instances by the length of time the member was relieved for each investigating agency (i.e., COPA or BIA).²⁸ In order to

²⁵ United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and United States Attorney’s Office Northern District of Illinois, “Investigation of the Chicago Police Department,” January 13, 2017, 74, accessed September 17, 2024, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/file/925846/download>.

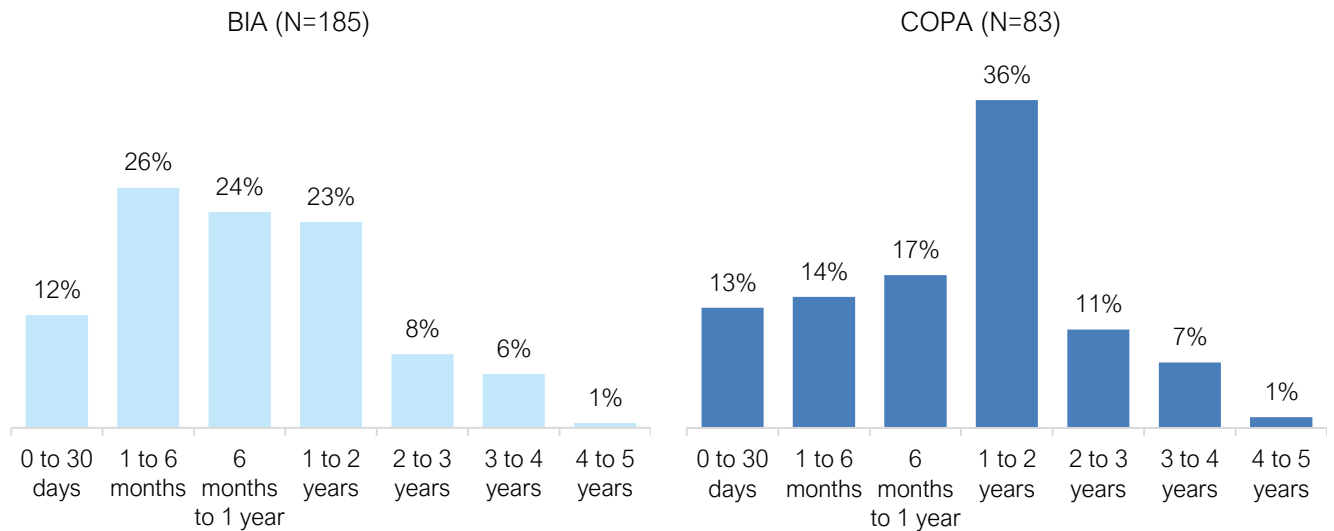
²⁶ Restored members were stripped for a median of 9.99 months (N=566). OIG notes that 2 of the 568 stripping instances resulting in restoration were missing relevant data to calculate length of time relieved of powers.

²⁷ Discharged members were relieved of powers for a median of 23.97 months (N=118). OIG notes that 2 of the 120 stripping instances resulting in discharge were missing relevant data to calculate length of time relieved of powers.

²⁸ The investigating agency does not necessarily signify the agency which initiated relief of powers. For example, CPD may move to relieve a member under investigation by COPA (e.g., if a member is arrested for an allegation that is within COPA’s investigative jurisdiction such as domestic violence) without COPA having made a recommendation to CPD.

compare these investigating entities more completely, the data presented below includes relief of police powers instances implemented on or after the launch of COPA in September 2017. OIG examined 83 concluded relief of police powers instances investigated by COPA and 185 concluded instances investigated by BIA. For cases in which COPA conducted the investigation, the relieved member was stripped for a year or less in 44% of instances, with 80% of stripping instances concluding in two years or less. Where BIA conducted the underlying investigation, 62% of stripping instances were concluded in a year or less and 85% were concluded in two years or less.

Figure 7: Percentage of Concluded Relief of Police Powers Instances by Duration for each Investigating Agency, September 2017 to March 2023



Source: OIG Analysis of BIA Records

Demographics of Relieved CPD Members (2017-2023)

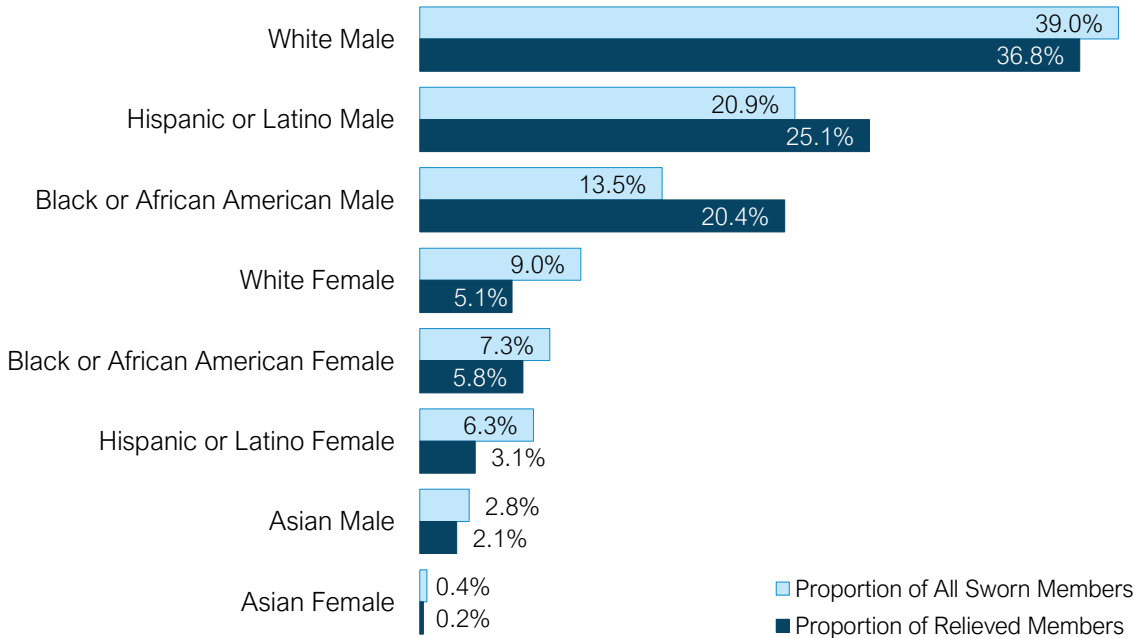
In order to evaluate the demographics of relieved members, OIG compared the demographic makeup of relieved members within 486 instances of relief of powers that occurred between January 1, 2017, and March 7, 2023, to that of the Department overall within this timeframe. From 2017 to 2023, female CPD members, on average, comprised 23.2% of all sworn CPD members. OIG found that 71 (14.6%) of the 486 relief of powers instances involved a female CPD member while 415 (85.4%) involved a male CPD member.

In examining the racial and ethnic makeup of members who were relieved of police powers between January 1, 2017 and March 7, 2023, OIG found that 204 instances (42.0%) involved a White member, 127 (26.1%) involved a Black member, 137 (28.2%) involved a Hispanic or Latino member, and 11 (2.3%) involved an Asian member.²⁹ From 2017 to 2023, the average proportion of White sworn CPD members was 48.0%; the average proportion of Black sworn members was 20.8%; the average proportion of Hispanic sworn members was 27.3%; and the average proportion of Asian sworn members was 3.2%. When examining race and gender together, OIG found that

²⁹ The data included members identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native (N=2), members who chose two or more races (N=4), and members who chose not to disclose their race (N=1). Due to sample size, these groups were excluded from OIG's analysis reported here.

Hispanic male members and Black male members were represented among relieved members at a rate higher than their proportion of the Department overall (see Figure 8 below).

Figure 8: Demographic Makeup for All Sworn Members Compared to Relieved Members, 2017-2023³⁰



Source: OIG Analysis

In examining the demographics of members whose stripping instances resulted in restoration of police powers compared with those whose stripping instances resulted in the termination of their employment, OIG did not identify notable trends or disparities in the racial or ethnic makeup of members. That is, OIG found that the demographic composition of members who were restored to full duty and the makeup of members who resigned or were discharged were comparable to the demographic makeup of all CPD members relieved of police powers.

C | Impact of Relief of Police Powers on Department Members

Appropriately relieving members of police powers when there is evidence of serious misconduct is a safeguard for both the public and the Department. As governed by the City’s collective bargaining agreements, CPD cannot impose a disciplinary penalty on a member until both an investigation and any associated grievance of the issued penalty have concluded.³¹ As such, while investigations remain open, the relief of police powers process serves as a “good tool” to protect public safety and the City from additional liability, as described by former OPSA leadership. Specifically, allowing

³⁰ CPD members with a race of American Indian or Alaska Native, Two or more Races, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or Undisclosed, and a CPD member with a gender of Non-Binary accounted for an average of 0.8% of sworn members and 1.4% of relieved members in the period analyzed.

³¹ For more information on CPD’s disciplinary system, see OIG’s “Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department Members” report. City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, “Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department Members,” June 6, 2022, accessed September 24, 2024, <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Fairness-and-Consistency-in-the-Disciplinary-Process-for-Chicago-Police-Department-Members.pdf>.

relieved members to retain their police authority while under investigation could pose a threat of further misconduct and harm to the public.

Nevertheless, CPD's decisions surrounding the relief of police powers also impact the members involved. Relieved members may experience a range of personal and professional consequences, which may be prolonged by lengthy investigations. In an internal CPD memorandum sent to all units in 2008, former Superintendent Jody Weis acknowledged the effect being relieved of police powers can have on members stating, "Relieving Department members of police powers is an incredibly serious matter which has a profound impact on the member and the Department." OIG spoke with leadership in ARS, the unit to which most relieved members are assigned, who stated that being relieved is a "shock" to members. ARS leadership reported that many stripped members feel isolated, betrayed, and left out, noting that members who are relieved of powers may be facing challenges involving their family, substance abuse, or mental health. Thus, to protect both the integrity of the process and the Department, CPD must ensure members' police powers are relieved and restored in a fair and consistent manner, weighing the risks to the public, the Department, and the member.

CPD Members Formerly Relieved of Police Powers

In connection with this inquiry, OIG interviewed four CPD members who had previously been relieved of their powers about their experiences. The relieved CPD members reported that they experienced consequences of being relieved of their police powers such as emotional distress, perceived judgement from their peers, and a loss of identity. OIG also spoke with leadership from the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #7 (FOP)—the union that represents CPD members below the rank of Sergeant. FOP leadership stated that "when you become an officer, that becomes your identity. When it gets ripped from you, you become an imposter until that entire process is over."

As discussed above, relieving members of their police powers during the pendency of a misconduct investigation is not in itself a disciplinary penalty (such as a reprimand, suspension, or separation). Nonetheless, the formerly stripped members with whom OIG spoke reported that being relieved of police powers felt punitive, and one remarked that being relieved of their police powers was a worse experience than the discipline they ultimately received at the conclusion of their investigation. One member stated that "a lot of officers feel like they're being punished twice," once when they are relieved of police powers and again when the disciplinary decision for their misconduct investigation is reached. This member reported that being relieved of their powers is "the worst thing that can happen to a police officer mentally."

All formerly stripped members interviewed by OIG stressed the financial consequences that they and others experienced while relieved of police powers, as relieved members cannot participate in overtime. One member reported that many officers rely on overtime to supplement their income and may struggle financially if they remain stripped for several years. FOP leadership stated that while members are reinstated when their misconduct investigation closes, there is no option for restitution for lost overtime, even if the member is exonerated of any wrongdoing. Another member estimated they lost "\$30,000 a year over a three-year period" while relieved of their police powers.

Relatedly, the length of time that members spent relieved was a common concern among CPD members. One member stated that the longer an investigation "gets dragged out," the more of an impact being stripped can have. An ARS Sergeant reported that the lack of transparency in misconduct investigations can worsen members' stress and uncertainty about being relieved of

powers, especially when investigations have long timelines, and the member lacks any sense of when the investigation might conclude. The ARS Sergeant claimed that this leads to relieved members being “done with CPD.”

Lastly, the formerly stripped members interviewed by OIG all expressed concerns about perceived inconsistencies in the Department’s decisions regarding the relief process (see Finding 1 for more detail). Several members noted that these perceived inconsistencies had undermined their confidence in the disciplinary system. One member stated that members can be stripped for “political reasons,” and FOP leadership stated relief of powers should be for serious infractions, “not just something that landed you in the media for a day.” The following case studies exemplify the wide range of circumstances that have led to the relief of police powers.

Case Study 1

In December 2015, two CPD members were relieved of their police powers related to an incident in which they faced allegations of arranging for the release of an arrestee in exchange for a handgun. Specifically, two CPD members detained an individual with a suspended driver’s license and advised the individual that charges would be dropped if they could produce a gun for recovery. The driver then called a relative who agreed to leave their legally registered pistol in an alley, after which the driver was released from police custody without citation. When the relative later reported the incident to IPRA, an investigation was opened into the CPD members’ behavior and both members faced allegations of coercing the driver and their relative into turning in a handgun in exchange for the driver’s release from custody as well as preparing false reports. The Department relieved both members of their police powers within two weeks of the complaint initiation. At the conclusion of the investigation, BIA recommended that one CPD member be separated from the Department and recommended a 60-day suspension for the other member.

Case Study 2

In February 2020, a CPD Sergeant was relieved of police powers following their arrest for domestic battery. In the underlying incident, the Sergeant’s spouse called 911, was observed with a bloodied nose and lip, and later obtained an order of protection against the CPD member. The Department relieved the Sergeant of their police powers the day after their arrest. COPA’s Summary Report of Investigation notes that the Sergeant’s disciplinary history includes “2 Sustained Domestic Incidents Pending Accused Appeal” and further states “Domestic violence is a serious offense, especially when committed by a sergeant responsible for upholding the law and supervising other officers.”³² At the conclusion of the investigation, COPA recommended a 60-day Suspension.

Case Study 3

In December 2018, a CPD member was relieved of their police powers for disobeying a direct order. The member repeatedly answered “here” during roll call attendance, despite multiple warnings and a direct order to answer, “Here, Sir” or “Here, Lieutenant.” The member remained relieved until September 2021, when it was determined that they would

³² The CPD Sergeant had previously been relieved of their police powers for two years related to one of these Sustained domestic incidents.

not be separated for their misconduct.³³ At the conclusion of the investigation, BIA sustained each allegation brought against the member and recommended a five-day suspension.

Case Study 4

In June 2020, a CPD officer displayed their middle finger at a group of protesters during a protest following the murder of George Floyd, which sparked a misconduct investigation for conduct unbecoming. Following attention from the media and the public, including comments from then-Mayor Lori Lightfoot calling for the officer to be relieved of police powers during a press conference, CPD relieved the member of their police powers on June 8, 2020, and restored them a month later on July 10, 2020.³⁴ BIA closed the investigation in 2021, and the member agreed to a two-day suspension.³⁵ Separately, OIG identified another incident with similar allegations of a CPD member displaying their middle finger at a member of the public that did not result in the relief of police powers for the accused member.³⁶

³³ This CPD member had previously been relieved of their police powers on two separate occasions related to allegations of domestic violence. During one previous investigation, the member was relieved for 134 days and in the other they were relieved for 266 days. For the investigation involving the roll call infraction, the member was relieved of their police powers for 1,000 days.

³⁴ Humayun, Hira. "Police officer who gave protesters the middle finger stripped of police powers." *CNN*, June 9, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/09/us/police-officer-chicago-finger-stripped-trnd/index.html>, accessed March 4, 2021.

³⁵ Chicago Police Department Bureau of Internal Affairs, "Administrative Summary Report Log No: 2020-0002384," August 11, 2021, accessed September 16, 2024, <https://complaints.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/reports/2020-0002384.pdf>.

³⁶ City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, "Public Safety Section Annual Report 2023," August 5, 2024, 25, accessed July 23, 2025, <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/OIG-Public-Safety-Section-Annual-Report-2023.pdf>.

III | Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

A | Objectives

The objectives of this inquiry were to:

- determine what policies, processes, and controls BIA and COPA have for recommending relief (i.e., stripping) of police powers during the pendency of misconduct investigations and the consistency with which these recommendations are made;
- examine the Department's criteria for relieving members of police powers and the consistency with which it does so;
- determine what policies, processes, and controls BIA and COPA have in place for recommending the reinstatement of police powers and the consistency with which these recommendations are made; and
- examine the impact of relief of police powers on CPD members, including given the amount of time spent relieved and whether there are demographic disparities among CPD members who are relieved of their powers.

B | Scope

The scope of this inquiry included all BIA records of CPD members who were relieved of their police powers from May 2009 through March 7, 2023. These records were provided by the Department and OIG was unable to independently confirm that all records were included or accurate.

Additionally, OIG was unable to evaluate the consistency of relief of powers instances because the Department only retains records of members who were ultimately relieved of their police powers, and not records of instances in which there was a recommendation to relieve a member of police powers but the member was not ultimately relieved of their powers. OIG also examined COPA and BIA recommendation processes for the reinstatement of relieved members.

C | Methodology

To assess the policies, processes, controls, and consistency CPD and the oversight agencies have in place around the relief of police powers, OIG analyzed:

- CPD guidance for relieving members of police powers;
- COPA policy for recommending members be relieved of powers;
- COPA briefing notes for Major Case Incidents;
- COPA recommendations to relieve powers sent to the Superintendent; and
- CPD members' relief of powers history for members arrested or with allegations of DUI or Rule 14 violations.

To examine the impact of relief of police powers on CPD members, OIG:

- observed CPD's Alternate Response Section (ARS);
- interviewed ARS leadership;
- interviewed four formerly relieved CPD members;
- interviewed FOP, Lodge #7 leadership; and
- analyzed CPD records on relief of powers instances to evaluate whether trends existed by member race or gender.

To inform all objectives, OIG also interviewed:

- personnel from CPD involved in the relief of police powers;
- personnel from COPA involved in recommending the relief of police powers; and
- personnel from OPSA involved in the administration of the relief of police powers.

D | Standards

OIG conducted this review in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, Evaluations, and Reviews by Offices of Inspector General found in the Association of Inspectors General's *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General* (the "Green Book").

E | Authority and Role

The authority to perform this inquiry is established in MCC §§ 2-56-030 and -230, which confer on OIG the power and duty to review the programs of City government in order to identify any inefficiencies, waste, and potential for misconduct, and to promote economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in the administration of City programs and operations, and, specifically, to review the operations of CPD and Chicago's police accountability agencies. The role of OIG is to review City operations and make recommendations for improvement. City management is responsible for establishing and maintaining processes to ensure that City programs operate economically, efficiently, effectively, and with integrity. Further, Paragraph 561 of the consent decree entered in *Illinois v. Chicago* required OIG's Public Safety section to "review CPD actions for potential bias, including racial bias."³⁷

³⁷ Consent Decree ¶ 561, *State of Illinois v. City of Chicago*, No. 17-cv-6260 (N.D. Ill. Jan. 31, 2019).

IV | Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1: CPD's limited guidance and lack of documentation for the relief of police powers during the pendency of a misconduct investigation risk unfair application across cases, erode members' confidence, and limit oversight of the practice.

OIG found that CPD lacks formal policies for the relief (i.e., stripping) of police powers and does not document all recommendations or decisions to strip members, risking inconsistency in its application and impeding transparency for CPD members and oversight efforts.

A | CPD has limited guidance for seeking the relief of police powers in internal investigations. It consistently relieves police powers when members are arrested but not for other conduct fitting its stated criteria.

As stated, the Superintendent of Police has the sole discretion to relieve sworn Department members of their police powers.³⁸ For internal CPD misconduct investigations, BIA reported that it makes recommendations to and seeks approval from the Superintendent prior to stripping a member during the pendency of an investigation.³⁹ OIG reviewed BIA internal guidance on the relief of police powers, including a May 2008 memorandum, "Bureau of Professional Standards B.P.S. 08-146: Relieving Department Members of Police Powers," which provides a non-exhaustive list of circumstances in which a member might be relieved of powers and provides that "explicit approval by the [Chief of BIA is] required prior to relieving a Department member of powers due to a Log Number investigation."⁴⁰ OIG also identified relief of police powers procedures specific to BIA call-out incidents. Call-out incidents are situations requiring the immediate response of a BIA supervisor, including, but not limited to drug or alcohol testing of a CPD member, allegations of impairment on or off duty, firearm discharge incidents, and the arrest of a CPD sworn member. An April 2020 BIA Interoffice Memorandum again informs BIA call-out members that "explicit approval" from the Chief of BIA is required before relieving members of their police powers.⁴¹ Further, BIA Administrative Directive No. 2022-A003, "Synoptic Report Guidelines," dated September 2022, instructs BIA members to provide stripped members with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

³⁸ Chicago Police Department, "General Order G08-01: Complaint and Disciplinary System," December, 29, 2023, accessed September, 25, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6362>.

³⁹ For misconduct investigations conducted by external agencies such as COPA, a recommendation to relieve police powers can be made in writing to the Superintendent. See Finding 2 for additional information.

⁴⁰ Chicago Police Department, "Bureau of Professional Standards B.P.S. 08-146: Relieving Department Members of Police Powers," May 21, 2008.

⁴¹ Chicago Police Department, "Bureau of Internal Affairs Interoffice Memorandum: Duty Restrictions Imposed on Department Members," April 28, 2020.

pamphlet and outlines a list of notifications to be made following call-out incidents involving the arrest or relief of powers of a CPD member.⁴² Notably, the BIA internal guidance does not acknowledge the need to obtain Superintendent approval for the relief of police powers, whom is given this sole authority by “General Order G08-01: Complaint and Disciplinary System.”

CPD does not have general or special orders specific to the relief of police powers. Because the Department’s guidance for the relief of powers process is internal to BIA, it may not be widely known or accessed by CPD members outside of BIA—whereas Department general and special orders are accessible to CPD members and the public through CPD’s Departmental Directive System.⁴³ In interviews with OIG, four CPD members who had been previously stripped reported that they were unaware of any Department policies or guidance outlining the process or the criteria for having their police powers stripped. In August 2023, CPD reported to OIG that it planned to formalize the procedures for relieving a member’s police powers in a dedicated policy directive within the series of Special Orders pertaining to BIA operations and investigations, Special Order series S08-01. As of this writing, CPD has not yet incorporated such a directive into series S08-01. The lack of a centralized directive governing relief of police powers compromises CPD’s transparency efforts, as it leaves members without access to clear notice or guidance on what types of conduct can lead to the revocation of their police powers and contributes to CPD members’ perception of unfairness in the way relief of powers is implemented (see Finding 1). In response to this inquiry, CPD identified a reference page for members that contains information on the types of circumstances that may result in relief of police powers and the process, available on the Department’s internal website—or intranet—for BIA under the page “Relieving Police Powers.” These circumstances include a member being placed under physical arrest, drug use or abuse, refusing a random drug test or testing positive, being subject to a court order such as an order of protection, being indicted by a grand jury, gross disregard for rules and regulations, and other reasons determined to be in the best interest of the Department. The page also includes Frequently Asked Questions about relief of powers in addition to an informational video.

To analyze whether CPD’s practices are consistent with its existing internal guidance regarding the types of allegations that warrant relieving a member’s police powers, OIG examined the allegations against the 182 members who were stripped of police powers as of March 7, 2023. OIG found that most of the stripped CPD members had been accused of the type of conduct broadly outlined within BIA internal guidance. Department memorandum “Bureau of Professional Standards B.P.S. 08-146: Relieving Department Members of Police Powers,” states that police powers may be relieved for members who “have been placed under physical arrest,” “test positive for drug use or abuse,” “are alleged to have committed a felony, crime involving moral turpitude, or act of physical violence,” and “[o]ther reasons determined to be in the best interest of the member or the Department.” OIG examined the most common allegations associated with being relieved of police powers and found that over a quarter (26.9%) of the stripped members had an allegation involving gender-based violence or sexual misconduct—including arrests for domestic battery—and nearly a

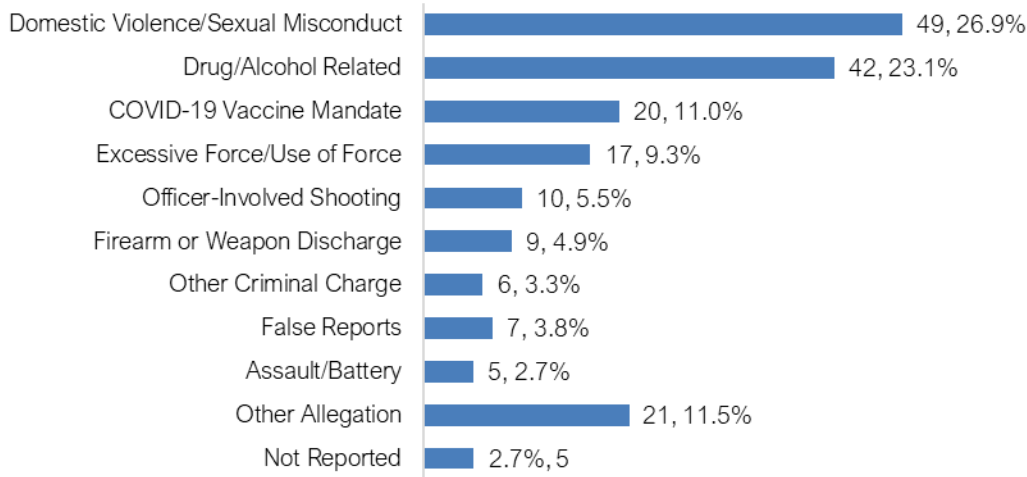
⁴² Chicago Police Department, “Bureau of Internal Affairs Administrative Directive No. 2022-A003: Synoptic Report Guidelines,” September 07, 2022.

⁴³ General Orders are directives that establish critical policies directly related to the core values and functions of the Department or the broad organizational policies and key practices relating to those core values. Special Orders are directives that establish protocols and procedures concerning specific Department functions, operations, programs, or processes.

Chicago Police Department, “Department Directives System,” July 22, 2025, accessed September 22, 2025, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/>.

quarter (23.1%) were investigated for allegations related to drug or alcohol use, including DUI and allegations of intoxication on or off duty (see Figure 9 below). Other allegations associated with a member being relieved of their powers included violations of CPD’s COVID-19 vaccination requirement (11.0%), excessive or improper use of force (9.3%), and officer-involved shootings (5.5%).

Figure 9: Allegation Type for CPD members relieved of powers as of March 7, 2023⁴⁴



Source: OIG analysis

As mentioned, BIA reported to OIG that relieving a member’s police powers is “cut and dry” for certain allegations—that is, stripping is immediate and certain to occur for categories of events such as arrests and DUIs involving CPD members. BIA leadership further stated that they do not consider any mitigating or aggravating factors if members are accused of such conduct. OIG found that in cases fitting these specific circumstances, CPD’s stripping practices are consistent. Specifically, OIG examined the Department’s stripping of members who had been arrested, a circumstance BIA reported would trigger immediate relief of police powers. In its analysis, OIG examined arrests of active CPD members between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2022, and found that of the 68 CPD members arrested, 67 were either stripped as a result of the arrest or were already relieved of their police powers at the time of their arrest.⁴⁵ OIG conducted an additional analysis of closed DUI investigations within BIA’s CMS. Of the 48 investigations in CMS for DUI allegations opened after 2010 and closed by January 18, 2024, the accused member was relieved of their powers in 43 cases (89.6%).⁴⁶ Of the five investigations where the accused member was not stripped, three investigations were initiated by third party witnesses, and no evidence of the member’s intoxication was obtained. Allegations in the two remaining DUI cases were against CPD members who were not active employees at the time of their DUI arrest.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ The total allegations amount to more than 182 because some members had multiple allegations.

⁴⁵ One member was arrested by CPD in August 2021 but was not stripped until April 2022. Based on its review of the investigative file, OIG was unable to determine the reason for this delay.

⁴⁶ OIG’s analysis includes only investigations that had reached a closed final status at the time of analysis, January 18, 2024. As such, it does not account for investigations of DUI allegations opened since 2010 that remained open at the time of analysis.

⁴⁷ One member was already suspended for a separate incident at the time of their DUI arrest. The other member was on military leave at the time of their DUI arrest, and their DUI case was adjudicated prior to their return to CPD.

Accordingly, OIG found that in the case of arrests, including DUIs, CPD has been generally consistent in its application of relief of police powers for accused members.

However, OIG found that outside of the “cut and dry” categories identified by BIA personnel, relief of powers during the pendency of investigations for other misconduct allegations was inconsistent. OIG reviewed Sustained violations of Rule 14 of CPD’s Rules and Regulations, which prohibits members from making false reports.⁴⁸ In an interview with OIG, the Department stated that it typically relieves police powers in misconduct cases that, if sustained, would likely result in separation of the member. Both CPD and COPA have asserted that separation is the appropriate discipline for Sustained violations of Rule 14.⁴⁹ Relieving a member of their police powers allows the Department to take action to protect the public and the City from additional liability before serious allegations of misconduct have been fully investigated and adjudicated. However, OIG found that the Department did not consistently strip members of their police powers when members were served with Rule 14 allegations, a step in the investigative process which suggests the presence of objective, verifiable evidence of potential misconduct. Nor did the Department consistently strip members upon Sustained findings of such allegations at the conclusion of an investigation. Specifically, OIG analyzed closed misconduct cases initiated between 2017 and 2022 and, as of August 2025, found that 52 cases in which members were found to have violated Rule 14. Of these 52 cases, the accused member was relieved of their police powers in 34 instances, had already been stripped related to a separate investigation in three instances, and was not stripped in 15 instances.⁵⁰ In 16 of the 34 stripping instances, CPD did not strip the accused member until separation charges were filed, often several years after the member had been served with the Rule 14 allegation.⁵¹ Within the period of analysis, OIG found that 17 members received a total of 66 additional complaints while remaining on active duty after being served with Rule 14 allegations. Notably, a member being under investigation for a potential violation of Rule 14 violation is not included among the circumstances which may warrant the relief of police powers listed in the internal guidance for BIA personnel.⁵²

When CPD delays or fails to relieve police powers of members accused of violating Rule 14, it not only contradicts its own stated approach to strip powers of members accused of conduct that would result in termination if sustained but also introduces significant credibility concerns by allowing these members to continue to hold public-facing law enforcement assignments, including preparing official reports and providing sworn testimony, further placing the Department’s credibility at risk. Such members who remain in full-duty roles and may ultimately be found to have lied may

⁴⁸ Chicago Police Department, “Rules and Regulations,” accessed September 25, 2025, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6412>.

⁴⁹ City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, “Enforcement of the Chicago Police Department’s Rule Against False Reports,” May 25, 2023, 5, accessed July 23, 2025, <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Enforcement-of-CPDs-Rule-Against-False-Reports-%E2%80%93-Rule-14.pdf>.

⁵⁰ All investigations reviewed were closed by the investigating agency as of August 27, 2025, but the Superintendent had not made final determinations on all reviewed cases.

⁵¹ The Police Board is an independent, civilian board that decides on disciplinary cases when the Superintendent of Police files charges to discharge a member from the Department. As of this writing, there is ongoing litigation which would allow CPD members to opt for a third-party arbitrator, instead of the Police Board, to rule on disciplinary grievances for cases of separation.

MCC §2-84-030

Chicago John Dineen Lodge No. 7 v. City of Chicago, No. 132241, 2025 WL 3302890 (Ill. Nov. 26, 2025)

⁵² See again, Background, Relief of Police Powers Process and Actors.

Chicago Police Department, “Bureau of Professional Standards B.P.S. 08-146: Relieving Department Members of Police Powers,” May 21, 2008.

compromise investigations, prosecutions, and community trust.⁵³ Further, when these members are allowed to continue serving without restrictions, CPD risks signaling a lack of accountability which might erode public confidence in CPD's commitment to upholding professional standards.

B | A lack of procedures to review misconduct cases involving stripping risks unfair application across members and unnecessary prolonging of the time a member is relieved.

OIG additionally found that CPD lacks a standard process to review and reinstate members in a timely manner, risking that the time members are stripped may be unnecessarily prolonged. Specifically, there is no review mechanism in the investigatory process to trigger reinstatement if it is established that the allegations will not result in a recommendation to separate the member. BIA leadership reported to OIG that its investigators are encouraged to review cases involving stripped members to determine if separation is likely. If, at any point in the investigation, the investigator believes that the investigation will not result in a recommendation of separation, the investigator should submit a request to their Lieutenant to restore the member's police powers. BIA further stated that it encourages investigators to review misconduct cases involving a stripped member as frequently as possible, but OIG found that the Department does not have any policy in place mandating a regular or periodic interval at which investigators are expected to review cases to consider recommending reinstatement of the accused member. Although BIA leadership stated that members who are stripped but are not pending separation charges should have their powers restored, they acknowledged restoration may not always happen due to factors like case re-assignment or the transition of investigators.

One consequence of prolonging the relief of powers process is that some members may miss out on promotional opportunities. OPISA Human Resources (OPISA-HR) reported to OIG that a member's restricted duty status does not preclude them from taking a promotional exam and receiving a place on the eligibility list for a rank promotion. If a member who makes the eligibility list for a promotion is relieved of powers at the time the promotional class is selected, the member will be passed over but remain on the list while the list is active. While OPISA reported that stripped members are not removed from promotional eligibility, OIG identified the risk that the act of being stripped may still result in a member being passed over for promotion. For example, if a stripped member were to take a promotional exam and receive a place on an eligibility list, but the list was subsequently exhausted and retired while the member remained stripped, the member would need to retake the promotional exam to receive a slot on the new eligibility list. OPISA reported that promotional exams for ranked positions such as Sergeant or Lieutenant are typically given once every two to three years. Two formerly stripped members expressed frustration at the relief of police powers causing members to miss out on promotional opportunities and stated that they believed that stripped members might be formally or informally denied promotional opportunities. One formerly relieved member reported that they believed a fellow stripped CPD member was not permitted to take a promotional exam while relieved.⁵⁴ Aside from rank promotions, all the members who spoke with OIG reported that they believed being stripped carried a negative connotation and professional consequences, with one member calling it "a scarlet letter" and another stating that "it

⁵³ These credibility concerns take on legal implications when considering CPD's obligations under *Brady v. Maryland* and *Giglio v. United States*. These precedents require CPD to disclose evidence that could exonerate defendants, including concerns regarding officer credibility. *Brady v. Maryland*, 373 U.S. 83 (1963), *Giglio v. United States*, 405 U.S. 150 (1972).

⁵⁴ OIG was unable to verify or confirm this specific incident.

follows you everywhere.” Similarly, a Sergeant within ARS stated that the assumption among members is that being relieved is a “black eye” on their records.⁵⁵ While OPSA-HR asserted that a member’s history of being relieved of powers is not specifically considered in the selection process for job assignments and details, it reported that it could not prevent personnel involved in the selection process from having personal knowledge of a member having been stripped.

Additionally, CPD members described the experience of being relieved of police powers as distressing. OIG found that a lack of communication with stripped members on the progress of the misconduct investigations during which they were relieved of powers contributed to stress and frustration for these members (see also Finding 2B). Formerly relieved members reported to OIG that they received few or no updates on the status of their investigations while stripped. One member reported receiving no information on the status of their investigation until its conclusion and their reinstatement. Another member described receiving only two status updates over the course of three years. At the time the interviewed members were relieved, CPD directive “Special Order S08-01: Complaint and Disciplinary Procedures,” did not include requirements for BIA to send investigatory status updates to members, including members relieved of their police powers.⁵⁶ Since that time, in order to comply with consent decree obligations, CPD has adopted revised “Special Order S08-01: Complaint and Disciplinary Investigators and Investigations,” effective December 2023, which requires BIA to notify any accused CPD member of the status of their investigation if it is not concluded within 180 days (6 months), with additional notifications to be provided every 60 days (2 months) until the investigative findings and recommendations are issued.⁵⁷ The Department reported that BIA provides such notice to accused members via emails generated by CPD’s CMS. These notification obligations apply to all members who are subjects of BIA investigations, but they are particularly important for accused members relieved of police powers. Unlike members who remain in their regular assignments during an investigation, relieved members are restricted from traditional policing duties, often for extended periods of time, as OIG found that members may be stripped for months or years (see again, Figure 6). Thus, the need for BIA to fully comply with Department requirements for regular communication with subjects of pending investigations is amplified for stripped members working prolonged periods of time in alternative assignments.

Further contributing to stripped members’ confusion and frustration, OIG found that CPD and OPSA provide little information to impacted members about how being stripped may affect their employment. OIG spoke with leadership in ARS who reported that members often arrive to the unit with a negative perception of the assignment and confusion as to how being stripped impacts their employment benefits. An ARS Sergeant stated that initially, many stripped members are unsure if they will still accrue time toward their pension or receive other employment benefits.⁵⁸ ARS leadership further reported that, historically, there had been little communication from the Department or OPSA about these employment considerations at the time the member is stripped

⁵⁵ The Alternate Response Section (ARS) is the unit where CPD members are often assigned when they are stripped of police powers during the pendency of a misconduct investigation.

⁵⁶ Chicago Police Department, “Special Order S08-01: Complaint and Disciplinary Procedures,” effective May 2018 to December 2021.

⁵⁷ Consent Decree ¶ 448, *State of Illinois v. City of Chicago*, No. 17-cv-6260 (N.D. Ill. Jan. 31, 2019).

Chicago Police Department, “Special Order S08-01: Complaint and Disciplinary Investigators and Investigations,” December 29, 2023, accessed September 25, 2024 <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6378>.

⁵⁸ OPSA reported to OIG that stripped CPD members continue to receive employment benefits including insurance coverage and will continue to accrue seniority, so long as the employee remains in a paid, active employment status.

and issued a Notice of Duty Restriction. In an interview with OIG, OPSA leadership reported that Human Resources does not provide any formal communication to members when they are relieved of their police powers. One formerly stripped member told OIG that they had been worried that being stripped might impact their insurance coverage, since certain disciplinary penalties such as suspensions over 30 days can result in the loss of health, dental, and vision coverage. In fact, so long as stripped members remain in an active employment status, their insurance coverage and accrual of time towards their seniority is not impacted by being placed in a restricted duty status. However, being relieved of police powers does impact certain opportunities, such as members' ability to work overtime assignments or to bid on preferred assignments (see Background).

In the absence of formal communication from the Department or OPSA, ARS leadership reported that they have made efforts in recent years to improve the transition for stripped members by joining the meeting when members are issued the Notice of Duty Restriction. ARS leadership reported that this has allowed them to more immediately provide clarity to members about the impact of being stripped on their employment benefits. ARS supervisors have also used this opportunity to address any negative perceptions of the unit by providing assurance to stripped members that their new assignment is still a valuable and meaningful job. A member reported to OIG that being relieved of their powers and placed in a desk assignment negatively impacted their identity and sense of purpose as a Police Officer. One member, who had spent over two decades in the Department, said the experience left them feeling "ripped away" from their teammates, coworkers, and friends. The member added that while members in ARS are still collecting a paycheck, the transition is difficult because they are no longer working the types of police assignments with which they have experience and associate themselves. Another member described the experience as "life-altering," feeling that they were assigned to a role they perceived as far-removed from their core duties as a Police Officer. While reporting that they did not receive much communication when they were relieved of powers, formerly stripped members reported to OIG that once in ARS, they received support and clarity from supervisors and peers. Some members reported that they were encouraged to reach out to CPD's EAP and spoke highly of the support provided by EAP in navigating their time relieved. One formerly stripped member referred to EAP as "unbelievably great" and another suggested that a satellite EAP office be established at ARS to help members assigned there who are struggling.

C | CPD's failure to document its recommendations and decisions to relieve police powers hinders oversight of the process for fairness and consistency.

Within this inquiry, OIG sought to examine the consistency with which BIA recommends, and the Superintendent imposes, relief of police powers for members with similar allegations of misconduct. However, because CPD does not document the cases in which the Department may have considered the relief of police powers but did not ultimately impose it, OIG is unable to analyze the consistency of this Department action. For example, for two misconduct investigations with similar allegations wherein one accused member was stripped of powers and the other was not, no documentation would be kept in the case where the member was not stripped. It is therefore not possible to assess whether stripping was declined by the Superintendent or not recommended by the investigative agency. Due to this lack of documentation, OIG cannot assess the fairness or consistency with which BIA makes stripping recommendations to the Superintendent, nor the fairness or consistency of the Superintendent's reasoning to act or not act upon a recommendation

or to strip a member outside of a recommendation. As a result, OIG was able to evaluate only the consistency of CPD's relief of police powers process with internal guidance and stated criteria—only for members who *were* relieved of police powers (see again Finding 1A).

Furthermore, even in cases where CPD members were relieved of police powers, the documentation supporting these actions is limited, and in some instances wholly absent. For example, OIG analyzed 34 investigations which resulted in Sustained Rule 14 violations wherein the accused officer was stripped of police powers and found that in 16 of those cases, no documentation of relief of police powers—including the Notice of Duty Restriction—was included in the investigative case file. BIA internal guidance requires that the Chief of BIA explicitly approve all instances of relief of powers stemming from a misconduct investigation but does not require BIA personnel to document the request for relief of police powers to the Chief of BIA. Consequently, there are no records of cases in which the Chief of BIA may have declined to submit to the Superintendent for review nor are there records of the BIA Chief's rationale for approving or denying a recommendation for relief of powers from BIA personnel. This lack of documentation means that there is no way to determine whether BIA personnel are consistently recommending to strip members in all cases fitting the Department's stated criteria. Additionally, where there is no record or an incomplete record of the BIA Chief's decisions and justifications, CPD and police oversight bodies cannot assess the fairness and consistency with which the Chief of BIA advances recommendations to relieve powers to the Superintendent for approval.

Similarly, there is no documentation of the Superintendent's final decision or justification to relieve CPD members' police powers. CPD asserted that all BIA recommendations to relieve police powers are raised to the Superintendent by the Chief of BIA. However, the Superintendent's approval and reasoning are not systematically documented and may, in some cases, occur informally via a phone conversation with the Chief of BIA. While CPD policy states that the Superintendent maintains discretion to restrict the duties of sworn Department members, the absence of formal records of stripping requests brought to the Superintendent and the subsequent decision to strip or not strip a member's powers creates an accountability gap. Specifically, this limited record keeping prohibits any analysis of why certain members are stripped while others are not and limits CPD's and any oversight agency's ability to evaluate whether the relief of police powers is applied fairly and consistently.

Lastly, the Department's lack of documentation for the relief of police powers may contribute to members' perception that the stripping process is arbitrary, political, or motivated by external pressure. In connection with this inquiry, OIG interviewed CPD members who had previously been relieved of their powers. Several members expressed skepticism about the fairness of the Department's decisions. One member stated they believed that decisions to relieve police powers were politically motivated. Another member reported the belief that CPD was quick to relieve members' powers for incidents that gain media attention. Separately, another member reported that CPD's stripping decisions seem to vary depending upon who was making the decision or the timing of the incident, stating that there does not appear to be any consistent pattern or precedent guiding relief decisions. When members are given little information about how or why relief decisions are made and where the decision-making process is too poorly documented to be assessed for consistency, CPD risks reinforcing the perception that the process lacks fairness.

The absence of clear policy, documentation, and communication regarding the relief of police powers risks inconsistency, prevents meaningful oversight, creates uncertainty, and erodes

members' confidence in the system. Without formal policy, BIA lacks a standardized framework for determining when to seek relief of powers in discretionary instances, increasing the risk of inconsistent application across cases. Additionally, its lack of procedures to regularly review the cases of stripped members risks keeping them stripped for unnecessary additional time while CPD's lack of communication with affected members further compounds the issue, leaving members frustrated and confused. The absence of documentation means there is no formal record of which cases the Chief of BIA recommends for relief, how the Superintendent's decisions are made, or the rationale behind them, thus limiting accountability and preventing assessments of fairness and consistency.

| Recommendations

The following recommendations outline steps to establish clear policies, improve oversight mechanisms, and ensure transparent communication with affected members.

1. CPD should adopt formal policy governing the relief of members' police powers.
2. CPD should adopt guidance for BIA investigators to conduct periodic reviews of pending misconduct investigations of CPD members relieved of police powers to ensure timely restoration of powers where appropriate and applicable.
3. CPD should review and revise its criteria for the relief of police powers, particularly to determine whether to include allegations of Rule 14 violations.
4. CPD should document the following in its electronic case management system:
 - a. Investigative notes regarding any consideration of the relief of police powers in BIA investigations.
 - b. Any recommendation to relieve police powers made from BIA, COPA, or any other entity to CPD's Superintendent, along with the Superintendent's decision and accompanying rationale.
 - c. The Superintendent's decision and accompanying rationale for any relief of police powers imposed outside of a recommendation from an investigating agency.
5. CPD should standardize the information provided to members at the time they receive a Notice of Duty Restriction, such as by creating informational materials about the impact of being stripped on employee benefits and the resources and support services available to members.
6. CPD should provide correspondence for all accused members, including those relieved of their police powers, as required by Department policy and the consent decree.
7. CPD should consider ways to continue and increase the accessibility of EAP services for stripped members.
8. CPD should promptly notify COPA of any CPD member relieved of police powers (see Finding 2).

| Management Response

1. *Agree. CPD agrees that it would be beneficial to memorialize its criteria for the relief of police powers, its current procedures for effecting the relief of police powers, and its current procedures for re-integrating relieved members back into full duty service once police*

powers are reinstated in a written document. However, CPD would not use the term formal policy in memorializing its governance of the relief of police powers process.

2. Agree. CPD agrees that BIA should adopt guidance for investigators to conduct periodic reviews of pending misconduct investigations for members who have been relieved of police powers during a pending investigation. Current BIA practice is for investigators to review their open cases on a quarterly basis, including cases where a member has been relieved of police powers. BIA will determine an appropriate manner in which to memorialize its current review practices. BIA will also consider whether it would be helpful for investigators to implement an automated notification to initiate a case review through the CMS.
3. Agree. CPD agrees that reviewing the criteria for the relief of police powers and making any necessary updates upon proper consideration is an appropriate step to ensure continued relevance, proper scope, and transparency of the criteria. With respect to including allegations of Rule 14 violations as a criterion for the relief of police powers, CPD's current policy provides that gross disregard for department rules and regulations is a criterion for the relief of police powers, which includes Rule 14. However, CPD does not agree that the allegation stage of an investigation is the appropriate time to trigger relief of a member's police powers. Rather, CPD's current practice and position is that the appropriate time to initiate relief of police powers is when an investigation yields evidence that indicates a Rule 14 violation will imminently be sustained. This approach better balances the impact of relief of police powers on CPD members with CPD's obligations to public safety and accountability, rather than immediately relieving members of police powers upon the receipt of any allegation of a Rule 14 violation.

Review and necessary revision of the criteria for the relief of police powers will occur as the criteria are memorialized per OIG Recommendation 1, above.

4. Agree.
 - a. CPD agrees that notes regarding consideration of the relief of police powers should be documented in the CMS. Investigators currently document the consideration of relief of powers in the form of a To-From report that is uploaded to the CMS and will continue this practice. BIA will consult with the CMS developer to ascertain the feasibility of implementing further functionality within the CMS to flag cases where the relief of police powers is considered.
 - b. CPD agrees that recommendations to relieve a member of police powers made to the Superintendent should be documented within the CMS, with the exception of any communications that are privileged. Investigators currently prepare a To-From report when a recommendation for the relief of police powers is made, which is uploaded to the CMS. BIA will consult with the CMS developer to ascertain the feasibility of implementing further functionality within CMS to flag cases where the relief of police powers is recommended.

With respect to documenting the Superintendent's decisions regarding recommendations to relieve police powers made by an investigating agency, these matters are discussed in weekly meetings between BIA and the Superintendent in which the Superintendent decides whether or not to relieve a member of police powers. BIA will consult with the CMS developer to ascertain the feasibility of implementing additional functionality within the CMS to record this decision.
 - c. With respect to documenting the Superintendent's decisions regarding relief of powers decisions not originating from recommendation from an investigating agency, BIA will consult with the CMS developer to ascertain the feasibility of implementing additional functionality within the CMS to record this decision.

5. *Agree. CPD agrees that providing standardized information to members relieved of their police powers regarding the members' benefits and available EAP resources is an important aspect of helping members transition after receiving a Notice of Duty Restriction. To this end, CPD's Bureau of Internal Affairs has maintained an intranet webpage since 2022 dedicated to providing uniform information to all members regarding the relief of powers process, ensuring members that their benefits are not impacted during the relief of powers process, and referring members to available EAP resources, as well as union resources. In order to further CPD's transparency and effectiveness in communicating with members relieved of police powers, CPD will memorialize standardized information into a one page sheet. In consultation with OPESA's HR components to ensure accuracy, the sheet will highlight that members' benefits are not impacted while relieved of police powers and further direct members to available EAP resources.*
6. *Agree. CPD agrees that providing correspondence to accused members regarding their investigations as required by department policy and the consent decree is vital to the department's transparency and accountability. CPD maintains that it is in full compliance with the correspondence provision of its own internal policy S08-01, which requires investigators to "at least once every 60 days, attempt to contact the reporting party/subject or the reporting party/subject's representative to provide status updates until the investigative findings and recommendations are issued." Accused members receive automated updates every 30 days while their investigations are pending that notify them of status updates. CPD further notes that as of the twelfth semi-annual independent monitoring report, CPD is in full compliance with paragraph 450 of the consent decree, which sets forth notice requirements to members under investigation for misconduct. CPD will continue to carry out its effective implementation of these policies.*
7. *Agree. CPD agrees that it is important to continuously evaluate potential advancements in delivering accessible EAP services to all members. Sworn department members who have been relieved of their police powers have the same level of access to CPD's robust EAP resources as all members, including the Police Chaplains, the CORDICO Wellness App, and numerous peer and professional counseling services. In particular, there is a dedicated Peer Support Group located within the Alternate Response Section (ARS) itself, where relieved officers are typically assigned. Any additional EAP resources that are implemented in the future will certainly continue to benefit relieved members as well. With respect to increasing accessibility of EAP services to members who are relieved of police powers, CPD will prepare a one page information sheet to increase awareness of available EAP resources as mentioned in OIG Recommendation 5, above.*
8. *Agree. CPD agrees that COPA should promptly be notified once a member is relieved of police powers in cases associated with COPA. Presently, at COPA's request, BIA provides COPA with a list of relieved members on a quarterly basis. Further, BIA verbally communicates with COPA in response to specific recommendations COPA makes to relieve an officer of police powers. In order to continue to strengthen communications between CPD and COPA with respect to the relief of police powers, BIA will seek to memorialize an internal procedure of notifications to COPA and explore alternative methods available to foster notifications to COPA when a CPD member is relieved of police powers.*

Finding 2: COPA has not fully implemented its policy for recommending and monitoring the relief of police powers during the pendency of misconduct investigations, potentially compromising the fair and consistent relief and restoration of police powers.

While the relief of police powers for CPD members is subject to the discretion of CPD's Superintendent, external entities may submit recommendations to the Department to strip members' police powers. COPA is a civilian agency with the jurisdiction to investigate specific allegations of misconduct by CPD members (see Background). COPA's stripping recommendations are issued by its Chief Administrator and sent to CPD's Superintendent.⁵⁹

In interviews with OIG, previously stripped members reported varying understandings of COPA's role in the relief of police powers process, with one member expressing a misconception that COPA has the direct authority to strip a member of their powers, which it does not. One CPD member stated that COPA should not have "so much power to mess with peoples' lives" and another characterized relieving members of their police powers as a "default remedy" for COPA. FOP leadership similarly expressed the belief that most recommendations to strip CPD members come from COPA. However, as shown in Figure 3 (see page 13), most misconduct investigations giving rise to the relief of police powers are investigated by BIA.⁶⁰

While COPA investigations account for a minority of stripping cases, its investigative jurisdiction includes allegations such as excessive force and domestic violence, conduct which may particularly warrant stripping as safeguard. It is therefore important that COPA consistently consider and recommend the relief of police powers, especially where there might be a risk of repeated or ongoing harm to the public. OIG examined COPA's policies and practices for considering and recommending the relief of police powers in association with its investigations. OIG found that COPA has not fully implemented its policy-based criteria for recommending relief of powers or to document the consideration and recommendation of the relief of police powers where required by policy. Further, OIG found that COPA does not comply with its obligation to monitor cases involving stripped members, an effort which is partially hindered by a lack of responsive communication from CPD. COPA's practices risk that the relief of police powers might not be considered or recommended in all cases fitting its criteria and that recommendations to restore a member's powers might be delayed.

⁵⁹ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, "Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers," June 5, 2021, accessed September 25, 2024, https://www.chicagocopa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/COPA-Policy_Powers-and-Duties_FINAL_2021-06-24.pdf

⁶⁰ Presently the Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA), and formerly, IAD.

A | COPA has made relatively few recommendations to relieve CPD members' police powers, suggesting it may not be considering stripping in all misconduct cases fitting its criteria.

COPA policy, “Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers,” defines its process for considering and recommending the relief of powers for a CPD member during the pendency of a misconduct investigation.⁶¹ This policy outlines key considerations COPA may weigh when making such recommendations—including the likelihood of continued misconduct, the severity of the allegations, and the potential for issuing a disciplinary recommendation of separation. COPA leadership stated that when making a recommendation to relieve police powers, COPA also submits supporting materials with its recommendation to provide the Superintendent with objective evidence demonstrating the basis for the stripping recommendation. COPA reported that it may consider recommending a member be stripped at any time during an investigation but that it often makes recommendations following interviews with the accused CPD members or the review of body worn camera footage. In general, COPA reported that investigators and supervisors are expected to consider recommending relief of police powers in accordance with the guidelines laid out in its policy. In this inquiry, OIG examined the consistency with which COPA considers the relief of police powers in its investigations.

While COPA’s policy criteria for recommending relief of police powers could have broad application, COPA has only moved to do so on rare occasion. Based on COPA’s records, from January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2022, COPA sent just 55 recommendations to strip sworn members of their police powers in connection with 42 log number investigations.⁶² For reference, COPA initiated 7,780 log numbers within this same time period.⁶³ A total of 469 CPD members investigated by any entity were relieved of their police powers during this time, according to CPD records.⁶⁴

OIG examined misconduct investigations during which COPA made a recommendation to relieve one or more accused members of their police powers. Based on its analysis, OIG found that COPA most often makes recommendations to relieve police powers in investigations involving allegations of excessive force or use of force violations, followed by allegations of domestic violence or sexual misconduct. During the five-year period of analysis, COPA made recommendations to strip CPD members of police powers in connection with investigations of the following types of misconduct allegation as shown in Figure 10, below.

⁶¹ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers.”

⁶² Of the total 56 recommendations to relieve powers made by COPA, one recommendation was for a civilian member and two were for Probationary Police Officers (PPOs). The civilian member was removed from OIG’s analysis.

⁶³ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “Data Dashboards, Closed Cases,” accessed September 25, 2024, <https://www.chicagocopa.org/data-cases/data-dashboard/>.

⁶⁴ See again, Background, Figure 3.

Figure 10: COPA Relief of Police Powers Recommendations by Allegation Type

Misconduct Allegation Type	Total Recommendations to Relieve Sworn Members of Police Powers
Excessive Force/Use of Force	25
Domestic Violence/Sexual Misconduct	13
Failure to Report Misconduct	4
Conduct Unbecoming	4
Firearm or Weapon Discharge	3
False Reports	2
Officer-Involved Shooting	2
Unknown	2
Total	55

Source: OIG analysis of COPA records

Despite having broad authority to recommend relief of police powers—including cases where there is a risk of repeated or ongoing misconduct or damage to public trust—OIG found that COPA may not be making recommendations in all cases that fit its policy criteria. For example, COPA conducted three separate investigations into a single CPD member for complaints related to excessive force. COPA received the excessive force complaints in August 2020, May 2022, and June 2022. COPA eventually sustained the force allegations and recommended a penalty of suspension related to each case. COPA’s policy provides considerations for recommending relief of powers to include “[t]he likelihood that the behavior under investigation will continue in the absence of restrictions on the duties or powers of the Department member. . . [and] [t]he extent to which, if left unaddressed, the Department member’s public visibility and presence will undermine the Department’s efforts to serve the public.”⁶⁵ Thus, COPA could have considered a recommendation to relieve the member of their powers during these excessive force investigations, but ultimately did not do so. COPA’s limited use of relief recommendations means that such cases might not appear before the Superintendent until the investigation is fully concluded. Recommending the relief of powers in appropriate circumstances during the pendency of a misconduct investigation provides an opportunity for COPA to flag serious cases for the Department’s review earlier in the process, giving the Superintendent an opportunity to mitigate harm and risk in advance of final case determinations.

OIG’s assessment of whether COPA’s stripping recommendations align with its policy criteria was limited by the lack of documentation around the agency’s process. COPA does not require investigators to document their consideration of stripping recommendations outside of a Major Case Incident (see below for more detail). Despite COPA’s policy requiring that “[a] copy of the recommendation be stored in COPA’s electronic case management system” when COPA recommends a member be relieved of their police powers, OIG found that this documentation is inconsistently maintained.⁶⁶ Of 42 log number investigations associated with a COPA relief recommendation for a sworn CPD member during OIG’s period of analysis, 31 cases were closed and accessible to OIG at the time of its analysis. OIG reviewed the electronic case files for these 31 log number investigations and found that only 25 included documentation of COPA’s stripping request for each sworn member within CMS. One case contained documentation for some, but not

⁶⁵ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers.”

⁶⁶ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers.”

all sworn members recommended for stripping, and five cases contained no documentation of any stripping request. As with BIA, the lack of documentation regarding the specific justification for recommending relief of powers in each case limits any effort to assess the consistency with which COPA issues such recommendations.

While COPA investigators are expected to consider recommending the relief of police powers in any case which may warrant it, COPA's policy only *requires* investigators and supervisors to consider recommending relief of powers in investigations of Major Case Incidents.⁶⁷ COPA defines Major Case Incidents as follows:

- All firearm discharges by Department members.
- Any death resulting from a motor vehicle accident or collision, if the Department member was engaged in law enforcement activity involving the individual or the individual's vehicle in the process of apprehension or attempt to apprehend.
- Death or serious injury while in custody or detained.
- Other weapons discharges, equipment usage or incidents resulting in serious injury or death.
- Any incident, as determined by the Chief Administrator (or designee), requiring an in-person response by on-call personnel or members of COPA's Public Information Section.

Additionally, COPA's policy requires that the consideration of relief of powers for all Major Case Incidents be recorded within the briefing notes maintained in its CMS.

OIG found that COPA's records do not demonstrate that it consistently considers recommending the relief of police powers. To examine whether COPA considers recommending the relief of police powers in all cases where it is mandatory to do so pursuant to its policy, OIG reviewed COPA's briefing notes for all Major Case Incidents from August 2020 through December 2021.⁶⁸ COPA provided notes of eight closed Major Case Incidents, yet only five of the eight briefing notes documented any stripping consideration. Of the three Major Case Incidents with no documented consideration of a relief of powers recommendation, all three involved injuries to the victim by the accused, including two that resulted in fatalities. Despite COPA ultimately recommending the separation of CPD members in four of the eight Major Case Incidents reviewed, COPA did not recommend members be stripped of their police powers in any of the eight Major Case Incidents for which it provided briefing notes to OIG. COPA's failure to comply with its own policy for Major Case Incidents, which are by their nature investigations involving allegations of serious misconduct, raises significant concerns. Because it either failed to consider stripping recommendations or is unable to demonstrate any consideration of stripping recommendations in serious cases—including ones involving fatalities—COPA risks undermining public safety and the integrity of COPA's investigative processes. These gaps further compromise any efforts to ensure the fairness and consistency with which relief of police powers is applied.

⁶⁷ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, "Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers."

⁶⁸ OIG originally requested Major Case Incident briefing notes from January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021. In response, COPA stated that it did not begin the practice of recording briefing notes for Major Case Incidents until August 2020.

B | COPA did not comply with its obligation to monitor its recommendations and cases involving the relief of police powers, hindered in part by a lack of notice from CPD. Lack of monitoring may risk prolonging stripping timelines.

While COPA's policy requires ongoing review and monitoring of relief of police powers recommendations, which would allow for a recommendation to restore a member's police powers where and when appropriate, OIG found that COPA did not fully comply with these policy obligations during the period of analysis. Specifically, COPA's policy states that if, upon further investigation, COPA's original recommendation for the relief of police powers is "determined to be mitigated or no longer applicable," the Chief Administrator may recommend that members' police powers be restored.⁶⁹ The policy contains guidelines for quality assurance and periodic review of all cases in which COPA has recommended that CPD strip a member of their police powers. The policy further requires that COPA's Chief of Investigative Operations submit a monthly report to the Chief Administrator outlining any new information that has been received in an investigation which has given rise to a stripping recommendation and whether this information might warrant the restoration of police powers.⁷⁰ However, in December 2021, COPA reported to OIG that operationalizing this aspect of the policy was still in progress. As of January 2023, according to a response to an OIG production request, COPA had still not yet implemented internal monthly reporting on cases involving recommendations to relieve powers. This lack of a structured review of its recommendations impedes COPA's ability to monitor whether relief of powers remains appropriate throughout an investigation, potentially leaving members stripped longer than necessary in cases where COPA might have considered a recommendation to restore powers.

COPA's ability to monitor its investigations involving stripped members is further complicated by limited communication from CPD leadership in response to COPA's stripping recommendations. OIG compared COPA's records of stripping recommendations it has made against BIA's records of CPD members who were relieved of their police powers. Of the 55 recommendations to relieve police powers COPA submitted to CPD between January 1, 2017, and December 31, 2022, OIG found that the Superintendent stripped members in 33 instances. OIG further found that when CPD acted on COPA's recommendation to strip, in roughly half of the instances the Department did so in less than a week, with a median time of six days from the recommendation submission. CPD did not relieve members of their police powers in at least 18 cases where COPA had recommended the relief of police powers.⁷¹ Of these cases in which CPD did not act upon COPA's recommendation, COPA ultimately included separation as a disciplinary recommendation in nine of these investigations, suggesting that these cases could have fit the Department's criteria for relief of powers. However, COPA leadership reported that CPD does not consistently inform COPA of the Superintendent's decision on a recommendation to relieve police powers. COPA reported to OIG that the communication it received from CPD regarding stripping recommendations has varied over time based on the CPD personnel involved. Without knowing whether CPD acted upon its recommendation, COPA is limited in its ability to monitor and review its investigations to determine whether the relief of police powers continues to be necessary and appropriate.

⁶⁹ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, "Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers."

⁷⁰ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, "Recommendations Regarding Department Member Duties and Powers."

⁷¹ OIG was unable to determine if CPD members were relieved of police powers at COPA's recommendation for four log number investigations involving unidentified officers.

Adding to COPA's challenges in effectively monitoring the duty status of members it is investigating is the fact that CPD can independently move to strip a CPD member who is the subject of a COPA investigation during the pendency of COPA's investigation, even without a recommendation from COPA. COPA reported to OIG that it sometimes only learns that a CPD member has been stripped through media reporting or by proactively checking databases. In some cases where CPD moves to strip a member who is the subject of a COPA investigation but does not inform COPA, it is possible that the stripping may stem from a separate or associated BIA investigation of the same CPD member. When CPD strips a member without informing COPA, it limits COPA's ability to monitor cases—just as it does when CPD fails to respond to a COPA recommendation to relieve police powers. The Department's inconsistent communication with COPA regarding stripping decisions hinders COPA's ability to appropriately consider recommendations to restore members' police powers. This communication gap risks that CPD members could remain stripped despite mitigating evidence or circumstances identified later in an investigation.

Similar to BIA (see Finding 1B), COPA is likewise obligated under the consent decree and additionally per MCC § 2-78-135, to provide regular notifications to involved parties—including the accused CPD member—throughout ongoing investigations, specifically for those lasting longer than six months.⁷² COPA's enabling ordinance mandates that this communication address “the general nature of the complaint or information giving rise to the investigation and the reasons for [COPA's] failure to complete the investigation within six months.”⁷³ Further, the ordinance mandates that COPA provide a notification to the recipients “every six months until the investigation is completed.”⁷⁴ COPA has adopted formal guidance, titled “Investigative Correspondence,” which operationalizes COPA's notification obligations under the MCC and the consent decree, including timelines for issuing notifications and designated recipients, as well as requirements for documenting outreach within its case management system. As mentioned, formerly stripped CPD members reported to OIG that they received little to no communication regarding the status of their investigations while stripped. To examine this, OIG requested from COPA the notification letters for two investigations involving the formerly stripped members who OIG interviewed.

In response to OIG's request, COPA provided correspondence for one of the two requested investigations.⁷⁵ For this case, which was under investigation for roughly three years, COPA provided OIG with two notification letters. According to the MCC requirements, COPA should have sent at least five notification letters within the timeframe of this investigation. Additionally, the letters provided to OIG did not speak to the general nature of the complaint, the information giving rise to the investigation, nor to the reasons for COPA's failure to complete the investigation within six months. Rather, the letters cited the general notification requirements under the MCC and stated only that COPA was continuing its investigation. However, COPA did provide OIG with notification letters for two unrelated cases which included the reason for the investigative delay. For example, one of the letters stated, “Though we are working diligently to complete our investigation, it remains open at this time for the following reason: Involved or Accused Department member(s) interviews are pending.” While COPA was able to provide examples of notification letters that did include some

⁷² Consent Decree ¶ 448, *State of Illinois v. City of Chicago*, No. 17-cv-6260 (N.D. Ill. Jan. 31, 2019).

MCC § 2-78-135. Involved parties include “the Mayor or their designee, the Superintendent, the Chair of the City Council Committee on Police and Fire, or its successor committee, the complainant, and the employee named in the complaint, or their Counsel.”

⁷³ MCC § 2-78-135.

⁷⁴ MCC § 2-78-135.

⁷⁵ The second case was closed in 2014 and under the jurisdiction of COPA's predecessor, IPRA. COPA stated it therefore “does not have responsive documents for” this case.

of the mandated information, these examples suggest that there are inconsistencies within COPA's notification practices for ongoing investigations. In addition to raising questions about whether COPA fully adheres with the MCC and the consent decree, inconsistent notification risks that important updates regarding the status of a misconduct investigation may be withheld from involved parties, including victims and accused officers. Such gaps in communication not only weaken public confidence and internal accountability but also undermine the transparency that the consent decree and MCC notification requirements are meant to ensure, leaving members and complainants without the information necessary to understand the status of their investigations. COPA's notifications may carry particular importance for accused members who are relieved of police powers and thus restricted from traditional assignments, working overtime, or receiving promotions. The timeliness and completeness of such investigative updates is essential to maintaining procedural fairness and transparency.

COPA's limited implementation of its authority to recommend the relief of police powers and its compromised ability to monitor those recommendations may present risks to the fairness and consistency of the relief of police powers process. COPA has not widely issued recommendations to strip and only requires the consideration of recommending the relief of powers in a narrow set of cases. This creates the risk that cases fitting its criteria might go unconsidered and that CPD members with serious misconduct allegations might continue to exercise police powers, thereby risking repeated or ongoing harm. Conversely, COPA's failure to monitor its investigations for circumstances that may prompt recommendations to restore police powers risks that appropriate recommendations to restore members' police powers could go overlooked. By addressing these inconsistencies, COPA can more confidently ensure it is making recommendations in all cases which may warrant it and that it is in compliance with its policies for the review of investigations involving stripped members.

| Recommendations

The following recommendations outline steps to ensure COPA consistently applies its policies for recommending, documenting, and monitoring the relief of police powers, enhancing transparency and fostering confidence among members of the public and members of the Department.

9. COPA should consider recommending relief of police powers in Major Case Incidents, as required in COPA policy, and document having done so.
10. COPA should document any consideration of recommending the relief of police powers in its investigations in the electronic case management system.
11. COPA should complete a monthly review of all recommendations for relief of police powers made to CPD, as required in COPA policy, and document having done so.
12. COPA should provide timely and substantive investigative status updates, as required in COPA policy, the consent decree, and MCC § 2-78-135.

| Management Response

9. *Agree. COPA consistently considers recommending relief of powers in Major Case Incidents. For example, whether a relief of powers request is appropriate is evaluated during every internal briefing on officer-involved shootings, officer-involved deaths, and motor*

vehicle pursuits. This is typically documented in internal memos included in the case working file.

- 10. Agree. COPA consistently considers recommending relief of powers in Major Case Incidents. For example, whether a relief of powers request is appropriate is evaluated during every internal briefing on officer-involved shootings, officer-involved deaths, and motor vehicle pursuits. This is typically documented in internal memos included in the case working file.*
- 11. Agree. COPA currently reviews all recommendations for relief of powers on a regular basis. COPA plans to review all recommendations for relief of powers on a quarterly basis. COPA is currently in the process of revising its policy regarding relief of powers to better align with current practice and staffing levels.³ This timeline ensures timely review of the continued necessity of duty restrictions. COPA also already regularly engages with CPD regarding the need for continued duty restrictions on an as-needed basis based on case developments.*
- 12. Agree. COPA timely provides updates as required. COPA's notification letters are auto generated through the electronic case management system. Previously, COPA discovered some letters did not include the reason the investigation had not concluded within 180-days. COPA corrected this problem in mid-2025.*

V | Conclusion

CPD's practice of relieving members of police powers, particularly during the pendency of investigations into allegations of serious misconduct or allegations of misconduct which compromise the Department's integrity, can serve as a necessary safeguard by temporarily removing a member from public-facing roles and restricting their authority to minimize the risk of repeated or ongoing harm while the allegations are investigated. Still, the relief of police powers must be applied with consideration of the risks and costs to individual CPD members, as formerly stripped CPD members reported to OIG that they experienced various personal and professional consequences.

In this inquiry, OIG found that BIA lacks a framework for determining when to seek relief of powers in misconduct investigations outside a specific set of circumstances, increasing the risk of inconsistency across cases. OIG further found that CPD's limited communication with relieved members leaves members frustrated and confused, while its lack of procedures to regularly review the cases of stripped members risks keeping members stripped for longer than is necessary or appropriate. Lastly, CPD keeps no formal record of which cases the Chief of BIA recommends stripping, how the Superintendent's decisions are made, or the rationale behind them—limiting oversight efforts to examine the fairness and consistency of these actions. CPD can improve its practice of relieving members of their police powers by increasing transparency about its criteria for the relief of police powers and its rationale in individual cases and by stripping members for conduct that is consistent with Departmental criteria. Further, CPD can work to mitigate unintended negative consequences of stripping on its members by periodically reviewing cases involving relief of powers and providing clearer communication to impacted members.

OIG additionally found that, while COPA has clear criteria for recommending the relief of police powers in its investigations, it has not consistently adhered to its own policy. Further, COPA's lack of monitoring of its recommendations and investigations involving the relief of police powers risks that appropriate recommendations to restore members' powers could go overlooked. Accordingly, COPA should work to ensure it is making recommendations in all cases which may warrant it and that it complies with its policies for the review of investigations involving stripped members.

OIG encourages CPD and COPA to implement the recommendations made in this report to ensure the fairness and consistency of the relief of police powers practice, a critical tool in preserving public safety, fostering public trust in the Department, and protecting the legitimacy of the police accountability system.

Appendix A | Certification of Law Enforcement Officers in Illinois

Certification reflects a state-level qualification granted to law enforcement members in the State of Illinois which legally bestows an individual with their respective police authority. Within CPD, the relief of police powers is an often-temporary restriction of this authority for sworn members imposed by the Superintendent. The body responsible for certifying law enforcement actors in the state is the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB), which “certif[ies] personnel who have acquired the levels of education, training, and experience necessary to perform the duties of law enforcement.”⁷⁶ ILETSB certification “is required to serve as a law enforcement officer in Illinois.”⁷⁷

According to the Illinois Police Training Act, “a law enforcement officer’s certification becomes inactive upon termination, resignation, retirement, or separation from the officer’s employing law enforcement agency for any reason.”⁷⁸ An officer’s certification may be reactivated by ILETSB if they join another agency. Additionally, as mandated by Paragraph 518 of the consent decree entered in *Illinois v. Chicago*, CPD must “provide the required notice regarding disciplinary matters to the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, including when an officer resigns while a misconduct investigation or disciplinary charges are pending.”⁷⁹ To track these instances, there is a field within CPD’s CMS, the database CPD uses to monitor misconduct investigations, in which CPD notes if members resigned during an ongoing investigation.

In reviewing relief of police powers records provided by BIA, OIG found that 342 CPD members left or were separated from the Department while relieved of their police powers during the period of inquiry, as shown in Figure A1.

Figure A1: Members Whose Employment Terminated While Relieved of Police Powers, May 2009 to March 7, 2023

Type of Separation	Count of Members	Percentage
Resigned	182	53.2%
Discharged	120	35.1%
Not Specified	38	11.1%
Retired	2	0.6%
Grand Total	342	100.0%

Source: OIG Analysis of BIA Records

ILETSB’s website includes an “Officer Lookup” feature which allows the public to confirm the current certification status of law enforcement officers in the state.⁸⁰ OIG found that most members

⁷⁶ Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, “Agency Information,” accessed September 19, 2024, <https://www.ptb.illinois.gov/about/agency-information/>.

⁷⁷ Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, “Decertification,” accessed September 19, 2024, <https://www.ptb.illinois.gov/resources/decertification/>.

⁷⁸ 50 ILCS 705/8.1.

⁷⁹ Consent Decree, *State of Illinois v. City of Chicago*, No. 17-cv-6260 (N.D. Ill., Jan. 31, 2019).

⁸⁰ Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board, “Officer Lookup,” accessed September 19, 2024, <https://www.ptb.illinois.gov/resources/officer-lookup/>.

(264 members or 77.2%) who left CPD while relieved of their police powers did not have Active certifications as of June 12, 2024.

Figure A2: ILET SB Certification Status for Separated CPD Members

ILETSB Certification Status	Total Members	Percentages
Active	78	22.8%
Inactive	215	62.9%
Decertified	45	13.2%
Unknown ⁸¹	4	1.2%
	342	100%

Source: ILET SB Officer Lookup

Of the 78 former CPD members with an Active ILET SB certification status, CPD flagged only 35 (44.9%) as having resigned under investigation within its databases. OIG found that in at least 11 instances, members were not marked as having resigned under investigation despite information included in the BIA spreadsheet indicating the members had resigned while stripped.⁸² Concerns regarding the “Resigned During Investigation” flag were also raised by COPA in its January 2024 Rehiring, Resignation and Retirement of CPD Member policy review.⁸³ According to their report:

CMS contains data on the investigation and employment status of current and former CPD members, including a flag labeled “Resigned_During_Invest,” for every CPD member in the database. There is a similar label in CPD’s CLEAR database, which identically matches the “Resigned_During_Invest” label in CMS. COPA has been unable to locate a formal definition for this label in CMS or CLEAR, but we assume this label indicates that a member resigned during an investigation by COPA, BIA, and/or the District, or resigned during post-investigation disciplinary steps, such as Police Board, the Arbitration process, or Command Channel Review. Based on COPA’s independent research, *this label in CMS and CLEAR appears to be the only record kept at CPD of whether a member resigned during a COPA or BIA investigation*, making it essential to ensure a clear and consistent definition is adopted for the label [emphasis added].

Per this report, “COPA has identified over 200 CPD members who resigned during investigations, who are not labeled as “Resigned_During_Invest” in CMS and CLEAR.”⁸⁴

Additionally, OIG found that 34 members worked for another law enforcement agency after their time at CPD, meaning almost 10% of members who left or were separated from CPD while relieved of their powers have gone on to work in other law enforcement roles in Illinois. Within CPD records, the “Resigned During Investigation” flag is marked “Yes” for only 12 of these 34 members (35.3%) who went on to work for another Illinois law enforcement agency.

⁸¹ OIG was unable to find four former CPD members in its ILET SB Officer Lookup search.

⁸² An additional 28 members who were discharged by CPD and retain an Active certification status were not flagged as having resigned under investigation within CPD data.

⁸³ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “COPA Recommendations Regarding the Re-hiring, Resignation, and Retirement of CPD Members,” April 30, 2024, 4-5, accessed September 19, 2024, https://www.chicagocopa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2024-04-30_COPA-Recommendations-on-CPD-Re-Hiring-Resignations-and-Retirements.pdf.

⁸⁴ According to CPD’s response to this letter, the Office of Public Safety Administration controls the use of the “Resigned During Investigation” flag.

Also of concern, of the 78 members with an Active certification status, 50 former members (64.1%) do not have a CPD “Separation Date” listed on ILET SB’s website.⁸⁵ This omission creates the appearance that these members are still actively employed by CPD.⁸⁶ Appropriately notifying ILET SB of members who have left CPD under inquiry helps prevent potentially problematic law enforcement members from simply changing law enforcement jurisdictions.⁸⁷ Notably, the consent decree now requires CPD to notify ILET SB of members who resign under investigation.⁸⁸ June 2025 revisions to CPD’s “Special Order S08-01-08: Post-Investigation Log Number Procedures” policy now require OPSA to send ILET SB a “Notice of Appointment/Separation” and “Professional Conduct Report” when members leave the Department while disciplinary investigations are pending.⁸⁹

The concerns enumerated above suggest that CPD has not consistently communicated information to ILET SB regarding its former employees. Further, accurate record-keeping and improved communication between these agencies are necessary to comply with new parameters established under the 2021 SAFE-T Act.⁹⁰ These new provisions grant ILET SB the authority to decertify officers on a discretionary basis. Accurate employment and disciplinary records are critical to this effort as law enforcement agencies are required to notify ILET SB of any officers who have exercised excessive use of force, failed to intervene, tampered with dash or body-worn cameras, made false statements, or engaged in “any unprofessional, unethical, deceptive, or deleterious conduct or practice harmful to the public.”⁹¹ Similar to the importance of appropriately applying the relief of police powers as a safeguard to the Chicago community, properly notifying ILET SB of misconduct also serves as a form of protection against members who may present a risk to their communities for police departments and residents in other jurisdictions within the state.

⁸⁵ Five Decertified members also do not show a separation date from CPD in ILET SB.

⁸⁶ One member is actively employed by CPD. As a PPO, this member was terminated in 2018 for a residency violation but has since returned as an active CPD member.

⁸⁷ Robert Herguth and Tim Novak, “Chicago cops who left under a cloud land police jobs in the suburbs,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 27, 2017, accessed September 19, 2024, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2017/5/27/18358209/chicago-cops-who-left-under-a-cloud-land-police-jobs-in-the-suburbs>;

Casey Toner, “The Police Department for Fired Cops,” *Illinois Answers Project*, May 6, 2024, accessed September 19, 2024, <https://illinoisanswers.org/2024/05/06/roWPbbins-police-department-most-hires-of-recently-fired-cops/>.

⁸⁸ Consent Decree at ¶1518. CPD reached Secondary compliance with this paragraph in the eleventh reporting period. Independent Monitoring Team, “Accountability and Transparency,” Independent Monitoring Report 11, April 11, 2025, 74, accessed August 23, 2025, <https://cpdmonitoringteam.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/9-IMR11-Accountability-and-Transparency.pdf>

⁸⁹ Chicago Police Department, “Special Order S08-1-08: Post-Investigation Log Number Procedures,” June 30, 2025, accessed August 7, 2025, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6619>.

⁹⁰ 50 ILCS 705/6.3(c).

⁹¹ 50 ILCS 705/6.3.

Appendix B | CPD Response

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Management Response Form

Inquiry Title and Number: Fairness and Consistency in CPD's Relief of Police Powers (C2022-30931)

Department Name: Chicago Police Department (CPD)

Department Head: Superintendent of Police, Larry Snelling, CPD

Date: March 25, 2026

OIG Recommendation	Agree/Disagree	Department's Response and Proposed Action	Implementation Target Date	Party Responsible
1. CPD should adopt formal policy governing the relief of members' police powers.	Agree	CPD agrees that it would be beneficial to memorialize its criteria for the relief of police powers, its current procedures for effecting the relief of police powers, and its current procedures for re-integrating relieved members back into full duty service once police powers are reinstated in a written document. However, CPD would not use the term formal policy in memorializing its governance of the relief of police powers process.	September 30, 2026*	BIA R&D



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OIG Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Department's Response and Proposed Action	Implementation Target Date	Party Responsible
2. CPD should adopt guidance for BIA investigators to conduct periodic reviews of pending misconduct investigations of CPD members relieved of police powers to ensure timely restoration of powers where appropriate and applicable.	Agree	CPD agrees that BIA should adopt guidance for investigators to conduct periodic reviews of pending misconduct investigations for members who have been relieved of police powers during a pending investigation. Current BIA practice is for investigators to review their open cases on a quarterly basis, including cases where a member has been relieved of police powers. BIA will determine an appropriate manner in which to memorialize its current review practices. BIA will also consider whether it would be helpful for investigators to implement an automated notification to initiate a case review through the CMS.	September 30, 2026*	BIA R&D
3. CPD should review and revise its criteria for the relief of police powers, particularly to determine whether to include allegations of Rule 14 violations.	Agree	CPD agrees that reviewing the criteria for the relief of police powers and making any necessary updates upon proper consideration is an appropriate step to ensure continued relevance, proper scope, and transparency of the criteria. With respect to including allegations of Rule 14 violations as a criterion for the relief of police powers, CPD's current policy provides that gross disregard for department rules and regulations is a criterion for the relief of police powers, which includes Rule 14. However, CPD does not agree that the allegation stage of an investigation is the appropriate time to trigger relief of a member's police powers. Rather, CPD's current practice and position is that the appropriate time to initiate relief of police powers is when an investigation yields evidence that indicates a Rule 14 violation will imminently be sustained. This approach better	September 30, 2026	BIA R&D



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OIG Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Department's Response and Proposed Action	Implementation Target Date	Party Responsible
		<p>balances the impact of relief of police powers on CPD members with CPD's obligations to public safety and accountability, rather than immediately relieving members of police powers upon the receipt of any allegation of a Rule 14 violation.</p> <p>Review and necessary revision of the criteria for the relief of police powers will occur as the criteria are memorialized per OIG Recommendation 1, above.</p>		
<p>4. CPD should document the following in its electronic case management system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Investigative notes regarding any consideration of the relief of police powers in BIA investigations. b. Any recommendation to relieve police powers made from BIA, COPA, or any other entity to CPD's Superintendent, along with the Superintendent's decision and accompanying rationale. c. The Superintendent's decision and accompanying rationale for any relief of police powers imposed outside of a recommendation from an investigating agency. 	Agree	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. CPD agrees that notes regarding consideration of the relief of police powers should be documented in the CMS. Investigators currently document the consideration of relief of powers in the form of a To-From report that is uploaded to the CMS and will continue this practice. BIA will consult with the CMS developer to ascertain the feasibility of implementing further functionality within the CMS to flag cases where the relief of police powers is considered. b. CPD agrees that recommendations to relieve a member of police powers made to the Superintendent should be documented within the CMS, with the exception of any communications that are privileged. Investigators currently prepare a To-From report when a recommendation for the relief of police powers is made, which is uploaded to the CMS. BIA will consult 	September 30, 2026	BIA



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OIG Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Department's Response and Proposed Action	Implementation Target Date	Party Responsible
		<p>with the CMS developer to ascertain the feasibility of implementing further functionality within CMS to flag cases where the relief of police powers is recommended.</p> <p>With respect to documenting the Superintendent's decisions regarding recommendations to relieve police powers made by an investigating agency, these matters are discussed in weekly meetings between BIA and the Superintendent in which the Superintendent decides whether or not to relieve a member of police powers. BIA will consult with the CMS developer to ascertain the feasibility of implementing additional functionality within the CMS to record this decision.</p> <p>c. With respect to documenting the Superintendent's decisions regarding relief of powers decisions not originating from recommendation from an investigating agency, BIA will consult with the CMS developer to ascertain the feasibility of implementing additional functionality within the CMS to record this decision.</p>		



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OIG Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Department's Response and Proposed Action	Implementation Target Date	Party Responsible
5. CPD should standardize the information provided to members at the time they receive a Notice of Duty Restriction, such as by creating informational materials about the impact of being stripped on employee benefits and the resources and support services available to members.	Agree	CPD agrees that providing standardized information to members relieved of their police powers regarding the members' benefits and available EAP resources is an important aspect of helping members transition after receiving a Notice of Duty Restriction. To this end, CPD's Bureau of Internal Affairs has maintained an intranet webpage since 2022 dedicated to providing uniform information to all members regarding the relief of powers process, ensuring members that their benefits are not impacted during the relief of powers process, and referring members to available EAP resources, as well as union resources. In order to further CPD's transparency and effectiveness in communicating with members relieved of police powers, CPD will memorialize standardized information into a one page sheet. In consultation with OPISA's HR components to ensure accuracy, the sheet will highlight that members' benefits are not impacted while relieved of police powers and further direct members to available EAP resources.	September 30, 2026	BIA
6. CPD should provide correspondence for all accused members, including those relieved of their police powers, as required by Department policy and the consent decree.	Agree	CPD agrees that providing correspondence to accused members regarding their investigations as required by department policy and the consent decree is vital to the department's transparency and accountability. CPD maintains that it is in full compliance with the correspondence provision of its own internal policy S08-01, which requires investigators to "at least once every 60 days,	Already Implemented	BIA



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OIG Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Department's Response and Proposed Action	Implementation Target Date	Party Responsible
		attempt to contact the reporting party/subject or the reporting party/subject's representative to provide status updates until the investigative findings and recommendations are issued." Accused members receive automated updates every 30 days while their investigations are pending that notify them of status updates. CPD further notes that as of the twelfth semi-annual independent monitoring report, CPD is in full compliance with paragraph 450 of the consent decree, which sets forth notice requirements to members under investigation for misconduct. CPD will continue to carry out its effective implementation of these policies.		
7. CPD should consider ways to continue and increase the accessibility of EAP services for stripped members.	Agree	CPD agrees that it is important to continuously evaluate potential advancements in delivering accessible EAP services to all members. Sworn department members who have been relieved of their police powers have the same level of access to CPD's robust EAP resources as all members, including the Police Chaplains, the CORDICO Wellness App, and numerous peer and professional counseling services. In particular, there is a dedicated Peer Support Group located within the Alternate Response Section (ARS) itself, where relieved officers are typically assigned. Any additional EAP resources that are implemented in the future will certainly continue to benefit relieved members as well. With respect to increasing accessibility of EAP services to members who are relieved of police powers, CPD will prepare a one page	Already Implemented	BIA



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OIG Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Department's Response and Proposed Action	Implementation Target Date	Party Responsible
		information sheet to increase awareness of available EAP resources as mentioned in OIG Recommendation 5, above.		
8. CPD should promptly notify COPA of any CPD member relieved of police powers.	Agree	CPD agrees that COPA should promptly be notified once a member is relieved of police powers in cases associated with COPA. Presently, at COPA's request, BIA provides COPA with a list of relieved members on a quarterly basis. Further, BIA verbally communicates with COPA in response to specific recommendations COPA makes to relieve an officer of police powers. In order to continue to strengthen communications between CPD and COPA with respect to the relief of police powers, BIA will seek to memorialize an internal procedure of notifications to COPA and explore alternative methods available to foster notifications to COPA when a CPD member is relieved of police powers.	September 30, 2025	BIA

*Any approvals needed from the Independent Monitor and Attorney General under the consent decree may alter the implementation date.

Appendix C | COPA Response



March 25, 2026

Tobara Richardson
Deputy Inspector General
for Public Safety
Office of Inspector General
740 North Sedgwick Street, Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Via Electronic Mail

Re: Draft Report on Fairness and Consistency in the Chicago Police Department's Relief of Powers

Dear Deputy Inspector Richardson:

Thank you for providing a draft of the Office of the Inspector General's report "Fairness and Consistency in the Chicago Police Department's Relief of Powers." Through this letter, COPA responds to OIG's recommendations to COPA and seeks to supplement and/or clarify some of the information in the report.¹

A. COPA's comments on the draft report.

The scope of OIG's inquiry regarding this issue included a review of COPA's records that were 3-5 years old. Since that time, COPA has continued to improve its processes and documentation of relief of power requests. COPA believes the following information should be included in OIG's report to more accurately reflect COPA's current practices.

B. COPA's responses to OIG's recommendations.

OIG's report makes the following recommendations: "COPA should consider recommending relief of police powers in Major Case Incidents, as required in COPA policy, and document having done so"; "COPA should document any consideration of recommending the relief of police powers in its investigations in the electronic case management system"; "COPA should complete a monthly review of all recommendations for relief of police powers made to CPD, as required in COPA policy, and document having done so."; and "COPA should provide timely and substantive status updates, as required in COPA policy, the consent decree, and MCC § 2-78-135." COPA addresses the recommendations below.

Recommendations: COPA should consider recommending relief of police powers in Major Case Incidents, as required in COPA policy, and document having done so, and COPA should document any consideration of recommending the relief of police powers in its investigations in the electronic case management system.

COPA consistently considers recommending relief of powers in Major Case Incidents. For example, whether a relief of powers request is appropriate is evaluated during every internal briefing on officer-

¹ COPA's management response form is attached to this letter.

involved shootings, officer-involved deaths, and motor vehicle pursuits. This is typically documented in internal memos included in the case working file.²

Recommendation: COPA should complete a monthly review of all recommendations for relief of police powers made to CPD, as required in COPA policy, and document having done so.

COPA currently reviews all recommendations for relief of powers on a regular basis. COPA plans to review all recommendations for relief of powers on a quarterly basis. COPA is currently in the process of revising its policy regarding relief of powers to better align with current practice and staffing levels.³ This timeline ensures timely review of the continued necessity of duty restrictions. COPA also already regularly engages with CPD regarding the need for continued duty restrictions on an as-needed basis based on case developments.

Recommendation: COPA should provide timely and substantive status updates, as required in COPA policy, the consent decree, and MCC § 2-78-135.

COPA timely provides updates as required. COPA's notification letters are auto generated through the electronic case management system. Previously, COPA discovered some letters did not include the reason the investigation had not concluded within 180-days. COPA corrected this problem in mid-2025.⁴

C. Conclusion.

As always, COPA appreciates OIG's continued diligent review of COPA's investigations. I hope the information provided in this letter can be included in OIG's final report to provide additional context surrounding the relief of powers.

Respectfully,



LaKenya White
Chief Administrator
Civilian Office of Police Accountability

² See, e.g., Log Nos. 2024-0002819; 2024-0003052; 2025-0000985.

³ COPA will provide additional training to investigative staff upon completion of the revised policy.

⁴ See, e.g., Log Nos. 2022-0002017 and 2024-0006049.

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Management Response Form

Inquiry Title and Number: Fairness and Consistency in CPD's Relief of Police Powers (C2022-30931)

Department Name: Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA)

Department Head: Chief Administrator, LaKenya White, COPA

Date: March 25, 2026

OIG Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Department's Response and Proposed Action	Implementation Target Date	Party Responsible
9. COPA should consider recommending relief of police powers in Major Case Incidents, as required in COPA policy, and document having done so.	Agree	See attached letter.	On-going	COPA leadership
10. COPA should document any consideration of recommending the relief of police powers in its investigations in the electronic case management system.	Agree	See attached letter.	On-going	COPA leadership



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OIG Recommendation	Agree/ Disagree	Department's Response and Proposed Action	Implementation Target Date	Party Responsible
11. COPA should complete a monthly review of all recommendations for relief of police powers made to CPD, as required in COPA policy, and document having done so.	Agree ¹	See attached letter.	On-going	COPA leadership
12. COPA should provide timely and substantive investigative status updates, as required in COPA policy, the consent decree, and MCC § 2-78-135.	Agree	See attached letter.	On-going	COPA leadership

¹ As noted in the attached letter, COPA believes a quarterly review is more appropriate.



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