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**SENATE BILL 6207**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2024 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Dhingra, Lovelett, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nobles, Saldaña, Stanford, Valdez, and C. Wilson; by request of Office of Independent Investigations

Read first time 01/12/24. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

1 AN ACT Relating to updating processes of the office of  
2 independent investigations by changing authority to obtain and share  
3 investigative information and aligning with current operations and  
4 practices; amending RCW 43.102.010, 43.102.050, 43.102.080,  
5 43.102.100, 43.102.120, and 43.102.800; and providing an expiration  
6 date.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

8 **Sec. 1.** RCW 43.102.010 and 2021 c 318 s 201 are each amended to  
9 read as follows:

10 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter  
11 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

12 (1) "Advisory board" means the office of independent  
13 investigations advisory board.

14 (2) "Deadly force" has the meaning provided in RCW 9A.16.010.

15 (3) "Director" means the director of the office of independent  
16 investigations.

17 (4) "Great bodily harm" has the meaning provided in RCW  
18 9A.04.110.

19 (5) "In-custody" refers to a person who is under the physical  
20 control of a general authority Washington law enforcement agency or a  
21 limited authority Washington law enforcement agency as defined in RCW

1 10.93.020 or a city, county, or regional adult or juvenile  
2 institution, correctional, jail, holding, or detention facility as  
3 defined in RCW 70.48.020, 72.09.015, or 13.40.020.

4 (6) "Independent investigation team" means a team of qualified  
5 and certified peace officer investigators, civilian crime scene  
6 specialists, and other representatives who operate independently of  
7 any involved agency to conduct investigations of police deadly force  
8 incidents. An independent investigation team may be comprised of  
9 multiple law enforcement agencies who jointly investigate police use  
10 of force incidents in their geographical regions or may be a single  
11 law enforcement agency, provided it is not the involved agency.

12 (7) "Involved agency" means a general authority Washington law  
13 enforcement agency or limited authority Washington law enforcement  
14 agency, as defined in RCW 10.93.020, that employs or supervises the  
15 officer or officers who are an involved officer as defined in this  
16 section, or an agency responsible for a city, county, or regional  
17 adult or juvenile institution, correctional, jail, holding, or  
18 detention facility as defined in RCW 70.48.020, 72.09.015, or  
19 13.40.020.

20 (8) "Involved officer" means one of the following persons who is  
21 involved in an incident as an actor or custodial officer in which the  
22 act or omission by the individual is within the scope of the  
23 jurisdiction of the office as defined in this chapter:

24 (a) A general authority Washington peace officer, specially  
25 commissioned Washington peace officer, or limited authority  
26 Washington peace officer, as defined in RCW 10.93.020, whether on or  
27 off duty if he or she is exercising his or her authority as a peace  
28 officer; or

29 (b) An individual while employed in a city, county, or regional  
30 adult or juvenile institution, correctional, jail, holding, or  
31 detention facility as defined in RCW 70.48.020, 72.09.015, or  
32 13.40.020.

33 (9) "Office" means the office of independent investigations.

34 (10) "Substantial bodily harm" has the same meaning as in RCW  
35 9A.04.110.

36 (11) "911 communications center" for purposes of this chapter  
37 means a public safety answering point or any other entity that  
38 captures and maintains data that is utilized in a 911 emergency  
39 communications system, as defined in RCW 38.52.010.

1       **Sec. 2.** RCW 43.102.050 and 2021 c 318 s 304 are each amended to  
2 read as follows:

3       (1) The director shall:

4       (a) Oversee the duties and functions of the office and  
5 investigations conducted by the office pursuant to this chapter;

6       (b) Hire or contract with investigators and other personnel as  
7 the director considers necessary to perform investigations conducted  
8 by the office, and other duties as required, under this chapter;

9       (c) Plan and provide trainings for office personnel, including  
10 contracted investigators, that promote recognition of and respect  
11 for, the diverse races, ethnicities, and cultures of the state;

12       (d) Plan and provide training for advisory board members  
13 including training to utilize an antiracist lens in their duties as  
14 advisory board members;

15       (e) Publish reports of investigations conducted under this  
16 chapter;

17       (f) Enter into contracts and memoranda of understanding as  
18 necessary to implement the responsibilities of the office under this  
19 chapter;

20       (g) Adopt rules in accordance with chapter 34.05 RCW and perform  
21 all other functions necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of  
22 this chapter;

23       (h) Develop the nondisclosure agreement required in RCW  
24 43.102.130; and

25       (i) Perform the duties and exercise the powers that are set out  
26 in this chapter, as well as any additional duties and powers that may  
27 be prescribed.

28       (2) No later than February 1, 2022, in consultation with the  
29 advisory board, the director shall develop a plan to implement:

30       (a) Regional investigation teams and a system for promptly  
31 responding to incidents of deadly force under the jurisdiction of the  
32 office. The regional investigation teams should:

33       (i) Allow for prompt response to the incident requiring  
34 investigation; and

35       (ii) Include positions for team members who are not required to  
36 be designated as limited authority Washington peace officers;

37       (b) A system and requirements for involved agencies to notify the  
38 office of any incident under the jurisdiction of the office, which  
39 must include direction to agencies as to what incidents of force and  
40 injuries and other circumstances must be reported to the office,

1 including the timing of such reports, provided that any incident  
2 involving substantial bodily harm, great bodily harm, or death is  
3 reported to the office immediately in accordance with RCW 43.102.120;

4 (c) The process to conduct investigations of cases under the  
5 jurisdiction of the office including, but not limited to:

6 (i) The office intake process following notification of an  
7 incident by an involved agency;

8 (ii) The assessment and response to the notification of the  
9 incident by the office, including direction to and coordination with  
10 the independent investigation team;

11 (iii) Determination and deployment of necessary resources for the  
12 regional investigation teams to conduct the investigations;

13 (iv) Determination of any conflicts with office investigators or  
14 others involved in the investigation to ensure no investigator has an  
15 existing conflict with an assigned case;

16 (v) Protocol and direction to the involved agency;

17 (vi) Protocol and direction to the independent investigation  
18 team;

19 (vii) Protocol and guidelines for contacts and engagement with  
20 the involved agency; and

21 (viii) Protocol for finalizing the completed investigation and  
22 referral to the entity responsible for the prosecutorial decision,  
23 including communication with the family and public regarding the  
24 completion of the investigation;

25 (d) A plan for the office's interaction, communications, and  
26 responsibilities to: The involved officer; the individual who is the  
27 subject of the action by the involved officer that is the basis of  
28 the case under investigation, and their families; the public; and  
29 other interested parties or stakeholders. The plan must consider the  
30 following:

31 (i) A process for consultation, notifications, and communications  
32 with the person, family, or representative of any person who is the  
33 subject of the action by the involved officer that is the basis of  
34 the case under investigation;

35 (ii) Translation services which may be utilized through employees  
36 or contracted services;

37 (iii) Support to access assistance or services to the extent  
38 possible; and

39 (iv) A process for situations in which a tribal member is  
40 involved in the case that ensures consultation with the federally

1 recognized tribe, and notification of the governor's office of Indian  
2 affairs within 24 hours in cases of deadly use of force;

3 (e) Training for employees and contractors of the office to begin  
4 prior to July 1, 2022; and

5 (f) Prioritization of cases for investigation.

6 (3) No later than December 1, (~~2023~~) 2025, in consultation with  
7 the advisory board, the director shall develop a proposal for  
8 training individuals who are nonlaw enforcement officers to conduct  
9 competent, thorough investigations of cases under the jurisdiction of  
10 the office. The proposal must establish a training plan with an  
11 objective that within five years of the date the office begins  
12 investigating deadly force cases the cases will be investigated by  
13 nonlaw enforcement officers. The director shall report such proposal  
14 to the governor and legislature by December 1, (~~2023~~) 2025. Any  
15 proposal offered by the director must ensure investigations are high  
16 quality, thorough, and competent.

17 (4) The director, in consultation with the advisory board, shall  
18 implement a plan to review prior investigations of deadly force by an  
19 involved officer if new evidence is brought forth that was not  
20 included in the initial investigation and investigate if determined  
21 appropriate based on the review. The director must prioritize the  
22 review or investigation of (~~eases occurring prior to July 1, 2022,~~)  
23 prior investigations based on resources and other cases under  
24 investigation with the office. Incidents occurring after the date the  
25 office begins investigating cases will receive the highest priority  
26 for investigation.

27 **Sec. 3.** RCW 43.102.080 and 2021 c 318 s 308 are each amended to  
28 read as follows:

29 (1) The office has jurisdiction over, and is authorized to  
30 conduct investigations of, all cases and incidents as established  
31 within this section.

32 (2)(a) The director may cause an investigation to be conducted  
33 into any incident:

34 (i) Of a use of deadly force by an involved officer occurring  
35 after July 1, 2022, including any incident involving use of deadly  
36 force by an involved officer against or upon a person who is in-  
37 custody or out-of-custody; or

1 (ii) Involving prior investigations of deadly force by an  
2 involved officer if new evidence is brought forth that was not  
3 included in the initial investigation.

4 (b) This section applies only if, at the time of the incident:

5 (i) The involved officer was on duty; or

6 (ii) The involved officer was off duty but:

7 (A) Engaged in the investigation, pursuit, detention, or arrest  
8 of a person or otherwise exercising the powers of a general authority  
9 or limited authority Washington peace officer; or

10 (B) The incident involved equipment or other property issued to  
11 the official in relation to his or her duties.

12 (3) The director shall determine prioritization of investigations  
13 based on resources and other criteria which may be established in  
14 consultation with the advisory board. The director shall ensure that  
15 incidents occurring after the date the office begins investigating  
16 cases receive the highest priority for investigation.

17 (4) The investigation should include a review of the entire  
18 incident, including but not limited to events immediately preceding  
19 the incident that may have contributed to or influenced the outcome  
20 of the incident that are directly related to the incident under  
21 investigation.

22 (5) Upon receiving notification required in RCW 43.102.120 of an  
23 incident under the jurisdiction of the office, the director:

24 (a) May cause the incident to be investigated in accordance with  
25 this chapter;

26 (b) May determine investigation is not appropriate for reasons  
27 including, but not limited to, the case not being in the category of  
28 prioritized cases; or

29 (c) If the director determines that the incident is not within  
30 the office's jurisdiction to investigate, the director shall decline  
31 to investigate, and shall give notice of the fact to the involved  
32 agency.

33 (6) If the director determines the case is to be investigated the  
34 director will communicate the decision to investigate to the involved  
35 agency and will thereafter be the lead investigative body in the case  
36 and have priority over any other state or local agency investigating  
37 the incident or a case that is under the jurisdiction of the office.  
38 The director will implement the process developed pursuant to RCW  
39 43.102.050 and conduct the appropriate investigation in accordance  
40 with the process.

1 (7) In conducting the investigation the office shall have access  
2 to, and copies of, reports and information necessary or related to  
3 the investigation in the custody and control of the involved agency,  
4 911 emergency communication centers, and any law enforcement agency  
5 responding to the scene of the incident (~~(including)~~) as soon as  
6 possible. This includes, but is not limited to, voice or video  
7 recordings, body camera recordings, and officer notes, as well as  
8 disciplinary and administrative records except those that might be  
9 statements conducted as part of an administrative investigation  
10 related to the incident.

11 (8) The investigation shall be concluded within 120 days of  
12 acceptance of the case for investigation. If the office is not able  
13 to complete the investigation within 120 days, the director shall  
14 report to the advisory board the reasons for the delay.

15 **Sec. 4.** RCW 43.102.100 and 2021 c 318 s 310 are each amended to  
16 read as follows:

17 The office will conduct analysis of use of force and other data  
18 to the extent such data is available to the office. The director is  
19 authorized to enter into contracts or memoranda of understanding to  
20 access data as needed. If data is available, the office should, at a  
21 minimum, analyze and report annually: Analysis and research regarding  
22 any identified trends, patterns, or other situations identified by  
23 the data; and recommendations for improvements. After July 1,  
24 (~~(2024)~~) 2025, the office should also annually report  
25 recommendations, if any, for expanding the scope of investigations or  
26 jurisdiction of the office based on trends, data, or reports received  
27 by the agency.

28 **Sec. 5.** RCW 43.102.120 and 2021 c 318 s 402 are each amended to  
29 read as follows:

30 (1) (~~(Following notification by the director that the office will~~  
31 ~~accept investigations of cases under its jurisdiction after July 1,~~  
32 ~~2022, an~~) An involved agency shall notify the office of any incident  
33 by an involved officer in accordance with the requirements under RCW  
34 43.102.050 and pursuant to this section.

35 (a) If the incident involves use of deadly force by an involved  
36 officer that results in death, substantial bodily harm, or great  
37 bodily harm the involved agency must immediately contact the office  
38 pursuant to the procedure established by the director once the

1 involved agency personnel and other first responders have rendered  
2 the scene safe and provided or facilitated lifesaving first aid to  
3 persons at the scene who have life-threatening injuries. This  
4 requirement does not affect the duty of law enforcement under RCW  
5 36.28A.445.

6 (b) In all other cases, the involved agency must notify the  
7 office of the incident pursuant to the procedure established by the  
8 director.

9 (2)(a) In any case that requires notice to the director under  
10 this section, the involved agency shall ensure that any officers or  
11 employees over which the involved agency has authority who are at the  
12 scene of the incident take all lawful measures necessary for the  
13 purposes of protecting, obtaining, or preserving evidence relating to  
14 the incident until an office investigator, or independent  
15 investigation team at the request of the office, takes charge of the  
16 scene.

17 (b) The primary focus of the involved agency must be the  
18 protection and preservation of evidence in order to maintain the  
19 integrity of the scene until the office investigator or independent  
20 investigation team arrives or otherwise provides direction regarding  
21 activities at the scene. The involved agency should ensure that  
22 evidence, including but not limited to the following is protected and  
23 preserved:

24 (i) Physical evidence that is at risk of being destroyed or  
25 disappearing and cannot be easily reconstructed, including evidence  
26 which may be degraded or tainted by human or environmental factors if  
27 left unprotected or unpreserved;

28 (ii) Identification and contact information for witnesses to the  
29 incident; and

30 (iii) Photographs and other methods of documenting the location  
31 of physical evidence and location and perspective of witnesses.

32 (3)(a) When the office investigator, or independent investigation  
33 team acting at the request of the office, arrives at the scene of an  
34 incident under the jurisdiction of the office, the involved agency  
35 will relinquish control of the scene to the office investigator or  
36 independent investigation team upon the request of the office  
37 investigator. The involved agency has a duty to comply with the  
38 requests of the office related to the investigation conducted  
39 pursuant to this chapter.



1 (b) Once the scene is relinquished, no member of the involved  
2 agency may participate in any way in the investigation, with the  
3 exception of the use of specialized equipment that is necessary for  
4 the investigation and where no alternative exists. If there is any  
5 equipment of the involved agency used in the investigation, steps  
6 must be taken to appropriately limit the role of any involved agency  
7 personnel in facilitating the use of that equipment or their  
8 engagement with the investigation.

9 (4) If an independent investigation team takes control of the  
10 scene at the request of the office, the independent investigation  
11 team shall relinquish control of the scene and investigation at the  
12 request of the office when the office is on the scene or otherwise  
13 provides notice that the office is taking control of the scene. The  
14 independent investigation team may continue to engage in the  
15 investigation conducted at the scene if requested to do so by the  
16 lead office investigator, director, or the director's designee. The  
17 involvement of the independent investigation team is limited to  
18 activities requested by the office and must terminate following the  
19 securing of the scene and any evidence preservation or other actions  
20 as determined necessary by the office at the scene. The independent  
21 investigation team may not continue to participate in the ongoing  
22 investigation.

23 (5) (a) No information about the ongoing independent investigation  
24 under the jurisdiction of the office may be shared with any member of  
25 the involved agency, except (~~limited briefings given to the chief or~~  
26 ~~sheriff of the involved agency about the progress of the~~  
27 ~~investigation.~~) as follows:

28 (i) Limited briefings given to the chief or sheriff of the  
29 involved agency about the progress of the investigation; or

30 (ii) Information essential to protect the safety of the community  
31 or the integrity of any ongoing, urgent criminal investigation; and

32 (iii) Sharing of the information will not impede the ongoing  
33 investigation being conducted by the office.

34 (b) Under no circumstances may any information provided under (a)  
35 of this subsection be divulged directly or indirectly to any involved  
36 officers or witness officers. If any information is disclosed  
37 pursuant to (a)(ii) of this subsection, the following must also  
38 occur:

39 (i) The office must document the exact information provided, to  
40 whom it was provided, and the reason it was provided;

1 (ii) The involved agency must agree in writing that no involved  
2 officer or witness officer will have access to the information; and

3 (iii) The person, family, or representative of any person who is  
4 the subject of the action by the involved officer that is under  
5 investigation by this office must be notified that the information  
6 was provided and, as soon as possible without jeopardizing the  
7 integrity of any investigation, be provided with the information  
8 contained in (b) (i) and (ii) of this subsection.

9 (6) If the office declines to investigate a case, the authority  
10 and duty to investigate remains with the independent investigation  
11 team or local law enforcement authority with jurisdiction over the  
12 incident.

13 **Sec. 6.** RCW 43.102.800 and 2021 c 318 s 502 are each amended to  
14 read as follows:

15 (1) In consultation with the director, the advisory board shall  
16 assess whether the jurisdiction of the office should be expanded to  
17 conduct investigations of other types of incidents committed by  
18 involved officers, including but not limited to other types of in-  
19 custody deaths not involving use of force but otherwise involving  
20 criminal acts committed by involved officers as well as sexual  
21 assaults committed by involved officers, subject to the same standard  
22 under RCW 43.102.080(2)(b). The advisory board must consider  
23 available data and information on other types of in custody deaths  
24 not involving use of force but otherwise involving criminal acts  
25 committed by involved officers as well as other types of incidents,  
26 the capacity and resources of the office, and any modifications or  
27 additions to procedures and processes necessary for the office to  
28 conduct investigations of those incidents. The advisory board must  
29 consider the recommendations and counsel of the director when  
30 conducting the assessment under this section.

31 (2) At the request of the advisory board, the office shall  
32 conduct analysis of available data, including identified trends and  
33 patterns, and other information relevant to in-custody deaths  
34 involving criminal acts committed by involved officers, sexual  
35 assaults committed by involved officers, and other types of incidents  
36 as requested by the advisory board.

37 (3) The advisory board shall submit a report with related  
38 recommendations to the legislature and governor by November 1, 2023.

1           (4) For the purposes of this section, "in-custody death" means a  
2 death of an individual while under physical control of a general  
3 authority Washington law enforcement agency or a limited authority  
4 Washington law enforcement agency as defined in RCW 10.93.020 or a  
5 city, county, or regional adult or juvenile institution,  
6 correctional, jail, holding, or detention facility as defined in RCW  
7 70.48.020, 72.09.015, or 13.40.020.

8           (5) This section expires July 1, (~~2024~~) 2025.

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