



THURSTON COUNTY
WASHINGTON
SINCE 1852

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OLYMPIA OFFICER WILL NOT BE CHARGED IN HOSPITAL SHOOTING

The Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney's Office has determined that no criminal charges will be filed against Olympia Police Officer Chris Cook for shooting a man who armed himself with a large-caliber revolver at Providence St. Peter Hospital, on August 15, 2009. Joseph Burkett, 43, was shot once by Officer Cook during a struggle in which Burkett pointed the loaded gun at Cook. Cook had been called to the hospital when hospital personnel were informed that Burkett was armed. The case was reviewed by an inter-agency officer-involved critical incident team, which concluded the bulk of its investigation late last week.

The Prosecuting Attorney's Office determined that Cook was legally justified in using deadly force to not only restrain Burkett, but also to protect Cook's own safety. Chief Deputy Jon Tunheim noted that Cook had no other reasonable alternative to shooting Burkett, and that doing so was necessary to protect not only Cook's life, but also the lives of hospital staff and patients. Tunheim concluded that, under Washington law, Cook could not, and should not be held criminally liable for the shooting. Tunheim commended the investigative team for its thorough and detailed investigation of the incident.

Released by EDWARD G. HOLM
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