

City of Akron  
**PRESS RELEASE**

Mayor Shammias Malik



For Immediate Release

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## **Mayor Malik and Chief Harding Release Statements Regarding Body Worn Camera Footage**

**Akron, Ohio, Dec. 5, 2024** — Tonight, the City of Akron has released the [body worn camera footage](#) from the officer involved shooting which occurred on Thursday, November 28. As a result of this incident, 15-year-old Jazmir Tucker was killed.

### **Akron Mayor Shammias Malik's full statement follows:**

*"To lose someone in an officer involved shooting is truly heartbreaking – especially someone so young. Jazmir Tucker was beloved by many people, and my heart is with his family, friends, and classmates as they deal with this terrible loss.*

*An officer's decision to use deadly force is the most consequential decision they can make and the circumstances surrounding the use of deadly force demand a heightened scrutiny. Often, in these incidents, viewing the officer-worn body camera footage and other available video helps to clarify circumstances and answer some questions. It can also raise additional questions.*

*Today, we are releasing several videos from this incident. After viewing them, I am left with many serious questions. The two officers who initially responded did not activate their body cameras upon exiting their vehicle. At some point, the cameras were automatically activated due to the presence of a nearby cruiser with activated lights, and once activated, the cameras can automatically store 30 seconds of video*

*without audio – so we have some video, without audio, of the shooting itself. So my initial questions were why the cameras were not activated by the officers and whether this violated the body worn camera policy. This will be reviewed in our internal investigation.*

*I also believe that many will ask why the officers used rifles instead of handguns in responding to this incident. This will be something that we discuss more going forward, including in the internal investigation, and as part of our comprehensive review of use of force, including when and how different weapons are used.*

*In hindsight, the amount of time that expired between the shooting and the initiation of physical aid to Jazmir is deeply troubling to me. I want to be clear that any unreasonable delay in the rendering of aid by police officers is unacceptable and has no place in Akron. This issue will also be part of our internal investigation, but in the meantime, Chief Harding has instructed APD leadership to conduct roll call trainings immediately with all of our patrol officers regarding on scene security and rendering aid.*

*Due to the angle of the body cameras and the bright light shining on Jazmir after he was initially shot, it's hard to make out from the videos what exactly happened leading up to the shooting and immediately following it. A gun was recovered from Jazmir's zipped-up jacket pocket. Given that, why did the officer decide to use his weapon?*

*That question will be addressed by the state Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), which began its investigation last Thursday night. Once BCI has completed its investigation the results are presented to the Ohio Attorney General's office for review and presentation to a grand jury of citizens in Summit County. The grand jury will determine whether criminal charges should be filed. When that process is complete, the full BCI investigation file will be available to the public. Additionally, after the grand jury process, the city will conduct an internal investigation into the use of force and determine whether a violation occurred.*

*As our community watches these videos, I know there will be many more questions. I wish we had more answers to provide in this moment. There are many questions we will not be able to answer until the BCI investigation is completed. We do know that two shell casings were recovered at the Northeast portion of Miller South, and that those are being tested against the gun that was recovered. I think anytime we have young people carrying weapons, we have to ask ourselves why and we have to work to change that.*

*While the BCI and grand jury process moves forward, there are steps that the City of Akron must take now. This year, there have been several incidents involving use of force that have raised significant concerns. In recent months, I have shared plans to conduct a comprehensive review of Akron's use of force policy and practices, as well as agency culture. This is essential to ensuring effective and accountable policing in our community. Next week, I will share more details about our use of force review – and how I believe that will translate into meaningful and systemic change.*

*I have an enormous amount of respect for our officers and the challenging situations they can face. So far this year, APD officers have recovered over 950 illegally-carried guns in our community, and those situations thankfully did not result in loss of life.*

*But this incident did result in loss of life, and our focus must be on doing everything we can to improve our response to situations like this. That focus is my responsibility as mayor, that is what our community deserves. Our community must have trust in our police department – and that requires accountability in specific incidents and strengthening of our policy, practices, and culture.*

*To any resident wishing to exercise their constitutional right to peacefully protest in reaction to this incident, protesting is a highly protected form of freedom of speech and the city will do all we can to make space for that. We will also be prepared in the event that any demonstration becomes unlawful which would include damage to property or injuries to others. Everyone has a right to protest but not in a way that harms or endangers others.*

*To those in our community who are hurting right now, I want you to know I hear you. To those who are frustrated or angry, I hear you. And to those who want to see action, I view this as essential for our community and it is my commitment to you that you will see it.”*

**Chief Harding's full statement follows:**

*“I want to share my condolences with the family and friends of Jazmir Tucker. An incident like this is tragic for our officers, for our community, but most especially for the loved ones who lost someone. I know that no officer ever wants to use their weapon in the line of duty. It is the*

*most serious decision any officer can make and when that decision results in loss of life, it's an outcome none of us wish to see.*

*The independent investigation is in its early stages and there is much we still don't know about what occurred. Even after viewing the videos, there are many things we do not know. I know that there are many in our community who will have questions and concerns related to the timeliness of the body worn camera activation, the delay in rendering aid, and the shooting itself. I hear those concerns, and my hope is that the investigation will provide more clarity. Our community, our department, and most importantly, Jazmir's family deserve and need answers to those questions.*

*I want to thank the State of Ohio's Bureau of Criminal Investigation for agreeing to take on this case. I am confident they will conduct an investigation that will provide answers to many of the current unknowns. We can only build trust with accountability and so that will be critical as the investigation unfolds. At the conclusion of BCI's investigation, I will order our Office of Professional Standards and Accountability to conduct an internal investigation to determine if any policies were violated.*

*I know the men and women of the Akron Police Department to be some of the finest people I've met. They are dedicated to their roles and to their service to this community. Incidents like this are hard on our community and our officers. I thank our officers for continuously showing up for our residents and for the important work they do day in and day out in Akron.*

*Finally, I support Mayor Malik's vision for a use of force policy review. Our department and our officers will be involved every step of the way in helping to address questions and concerns from our residents throughout that process. I believe this review will help better set our officers and our citizens up for success in all our encounters and help ensure that unwanted outcomes are less likely."*

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