

Seattle police retake precinct in CHOP, arrest multiple protesters following Durkan orders

Police Chief Carmen Best said “enough is enough” after fatal shootings in the area.

Seattle police have retaken the East Precinct after clearing out the protest area known as the Capitol Hill Organized Protest, or CHOP, making more than a dozen arrests after Mayor Jenny Durkan declared the gathering an unlawful assembly.

Police issued the order to disperse around 5 a.m. local time Wednesday, telling protesters to leave within eight minutes. At least 13 protesters were arrested for failing to clear the area after multiple warnings, police said.

LATEST SEATTLE CHOP SHOOTING KILLS 16-YEAR-OLD BOY, CRITICALLY WOUNDS 14-YEAR-OLD BOY

The East Precinct, which police abandoned last month following standoffs and clashes with demonstrators, was cleared of protesters, Police Chief Carmen Best told reporters from inside CHOP. Best said police were not moving into the building yet but would clear the area of barricades before beginning operations as soon as reasonably possible.

As officers in riot gear performed the predawn sweep to clear holdouts from the streets, police said a woman apparently went into labor on the east side of Cal Anderson Park inside the CHOP. Seattle Fire said it was responding to the scene.

Brandi Kruse @BrandiKruse

I will call it: As of 6:59am PT, #CHOP is no more.



Police also investigated several vehicles circling the CHOP zone after officers saw people inside them carrying firearms and wearing body armor. The vehicles had no visible license plates, police said.

Durkan's executive order comes after a series of late-night shootings in the area killed two teenagers and seriously wounded three other people. Police said other violent crimes have been documented in the area since demonstrators took over several blocks in the Capitol Hill neighborhood last month.

Seattle Police Dept.@SeattlePD

Jul 1, 2020

Replying to @SeattlePD

Officers enforcing today's order are wearing a higher-level of protective gear. Police are utilizing this equipment because individuals associated w/the CHOP are known to be armed and dangerous/may be associated with shootings, homicides, robberies, assaults & other violent crimes

Seattle Police Dept.@SeattlePD

Some of the violence in and armed individuals in the CHOP have been captured by open-source video recorded in the area:

“Officers enforcing today’s order are wearing a higher-level of protective gear,” police said. “Police are utilizing this equipment because individuals associated w/the CHOP are known to be armed and dangerous/may be associated with shootings, homicides, robberies, assaults & other violent crimes.”

Best said that while she supports peaceful demonstrations, “enough is enough.”

“The CHOP has become lawless and brutal,” Best said in a statement. “Four shootings - two fatal - robberies, assaults, violence, and countless property crimes have occurred in this several block area.”

Seattle Police Dept. @SeattlePD

Jul 1, 2020

Replying to @SeattlePD

After issuing multiple dispersal orders to clear the area, officers have begun making arrests at 12th Ave/Pine Street.

Seattle Police Dept. @SeattlePD

Chief Best’s statement on enforcement of Mayor Durkan’s executive order:

Statement from Chief Carmen Best:

Today, Mayor Jenny Durkan issued a 48-hour public safety emergency order to vacate the East Precinct/Cal Anderson area. Seattle police will be in the area this morning enforcing the Mayor's order.

This order, and our police response, comes after weeks of violence in and around the Capitol Hill Occupied Protest zone, including four shootings, resulting in multiple injuries and the deaths of two teenagers.

As I have said, and I will say again, I support peaceful demonstrations. Black Lives Matter, and I too want to help propel this movement toward meaningful change in our community.

But enough is enough.

The CHOP has become lawless and brutal. Four shootings—two fatal—robberies, assaults, violence and countless property crimes have occurred in this several block area.

My job, and the job of our officers, is to protect and serve our community. This is not an end to our department's engagement with demonstrators. We must continue our efforts to build trust and redefine our roles as guardians in our city. I will continue to work with the Community Police Commission, the Office of Police Accountability, the Inspector General, the Mayor, the Seattle City Council and ALL of our community and social justice partners in the coming weeks to encourage peace and to begin meaningful dialog about reenvisioning public safety in our community.

Some protesters have erected a small trash barricade while others stand between it and police. A protester with a megaphone—Rick Hearn, a private security guard in normal life—is standing firm, but urging everyone to stay calm.

She said that it was the job of police officers to protect and serve the community, adding that the clearing of the protest would not mark an end to the department's engagement with protesters.

"We must continue our efforts to build trust and redefine our roles as guardians in our city," Best said.



Demonstrators have occupied several blocks around a park and the Seattle Police Department's East Precinct for about two weeks. Police abandoned the building following standoffs and clashes with protesters, who demanded racial justice and an end to police brutality in the wake of George Floyd's death in Minneapolis in May while in police custody.

Protesters have said they should not be blamed for the violence in the area.



Seattle Department of Transportation workers remove barricades at the intersection of 10th Ave. and Pine St. on Tuesday at the CHOP zone in Seattle. Protesters quickly moved couches, trash cans, and other materials in to replace the cleared barricades. (AP Photo/Ted S. Warren)

There have been increasing calls by critics, including President Trump, to remove protesters from the CHOP zone following the fatal shootings.

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The action comes a day after Seattle Department of Transportation crews used heavy machinery to remove concrete barriers marking the entrance to the protest area.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Source: <https://www.foxnews.com/us/seattle-police-chop-protest-durkan>

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