



South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

P.O. Box 21398
Columbia, South Carolina
29221-1398

Henry D. McMaster, Governor
Mark A. Keel, Chief

Tel: (803) 737-9000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 20, 2022

Contact: Renée Wunderlich
(803) 260-3020
rwunderlich@sled.sc.gov

SLED INVESTIGATING OFFICER INVOLVED SHOOTING IN PICKENS COUNTY

Agents from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) are investigating an officer involved shooting from Wednesday evening in Pickens County between a man armed with a gun, deputies with the Pickens County Sheriff's Office, and officers with the Easley Police Department.

Deputies from the Pickens County Sheriff's Office responded to a call regarding a disturbance in Easley, SC. When deputies arrived, a man, later identified as Thomas Wheeler, 26, ran away. Deputies followed him and observed Wheeler forcing himself into an occupied car. The car's driver fled the vehicle, which left Wheeler inside alone. A standoff between Wheeler and responding law enforcement from the Pickens County Sheriff's Office and the Easley Police Department followed. Multiple deputies and officers shot at Wheeler. He died at the scene. No law enforcement officers were injured.

This is an ongoing investigation. As such, no other information about the case will be disclosed by SLED at this time.

SLED conducts law enforcement officer involved shooting (OIS) investigations at the request of the agency involved in the incident or the agency with jurisdiction. When requested to investigate an OIS, SLED's goal is to conduct a thorough, independent criminal investigation as timely as is possible under the circumstances. SLED agents will conduct interviews with all potential witnesses in this matter. Further, SLED will collect all relevant evidence and will forensically test such evidence as needed. Information gathered in the SLED investigation of the incident will be summarized in a case file report to be submitted to prosecutors.

The incident in Pickens County was the 29th officer involved shooting in South Carolina in 2022. This is the first officer involved shooting for both the Pickens County Sheriff's Office and the Easley Police Department this year.

In 2021, there were 40 officer involved shootings in South Carolina. The Pickens County Sheriff's Office had one officer involved shooting last year, and the Easley Police Department had no officer involved shootings last year.

A copy of this news release is also on SLED's website: www.sled.sc.gov

###



An Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

