



City of Racine Police Department
Policy and Procedure

Number: 509

Subject: Citizen Complaints		
Date Issued: 8-12-88	Effective Date: 02-25-05	Revision Number: 2

PURPOSE:

This agency is committed to providing law enforcement service that is fair, effective and impartially applied. In so doing, Department personnel are held to the highest standard of official conduct and are expected to respect the rights of all citizens.

In accordance with these commitments, it is the policy of the Department to provide citizens with a fair and effective avenue for processing and resolving complaints regarding the conduct of Department personnel, thereby clarifying the rights of citizens and department personnel and ensuring due process protection for citizens and members alike.

The main focus of this policy is to improve the quality of police service and maintain the integrity of the Department and its personnel. This is accomplished in the following ways:

1. Providing citizens with a meaningful and effective avenue for redress of their legitimate grievances against Department personnel.
2. Maintaining an effective disciplinary procedure that assures adherence to Department procedures and assists members in meeting Department objectives.
3. To assure citizens and accused personnel alike, procedural due process safeguards against false charges of misconduct or wrongdoing.

AUTHORITY:

§66.511(3) Law Enforcement Agency Policies on Use of Force and Citizen Complaint Procedures

DEFINITIONS:

Citizen Complaint - An allegation of misconduct against a Department member, employee or with regard to police service rendered, made to any member or civilian employee of the Department, either in written form, verbally expressed, or implied.

METHOD:

It is the policy of the Department to emphasize the prevention of misconduct as a primary means of reducing and controlling it. The Department will make every effort to eliminate the organizational conditions that may foster, permit, or encourage improper behavior by Department personnel.

It will be the policy of this Department to accept and investigate all credible complaints that constitute reasonable suspicion of misconduct, substandard performance or wrongdoing by Department personnel received from any citizen. "Credible", for the purposes of this policy, means "worthy of belief." Citizens will submit their complaints in person, unless extenuating circumstances exist, in order to obtain as complete a report as soon as possible after the incident. All supervisory interviews of complaints shall be audibly taped. Interviews conducted outside of the Department shall be recorded, using the audio portion of the Mobile Video Recording Equipment (MVRE) when possible. If it is not possible to audibly record the interview a witness must be present. Video taping of interviews is optional. Citizens will be furnished with a copy of the Citizen's Complaint Form PP144. The completion of a Citizen's Complaint Form is not mandatory for an investigation to proceed. The Chief's office will notify the complainant on the outcome of the investigation.

Following a thorough and impartial examination of the available factual information, the allegation shall be found substantiated, unsubstantiated, unfounded or the member/employee exonerated, in whole or in part.

If Department personnel do not adhere to standards of professional conduct, either through deliberate action or negligence, disciplinary action shall be applied in a prompt and objective manner. The final determination of disciplinary action shall be left to the discretion of the Chief of Police.

All documents concerning complaints of personnel misconduct are considered to be confidential. The documents shall not be removed from the Internal Affairs Unit by any person without the express written consent from the Chief of Police, or upon the receipt of a written order from a court of competent authority.

Department personnel are held to the highest standards of professionalism. A member's or employee's voluntary adherence to these standards, motivated by a moral obligation to perform each job to the best of their ability, is eminently desirable and the ultimate objective of the Department. By making available a clear effective policy on the handling of citizen complaints, the Department seeks to improve police and community relations and to maintain citizen confidence in action taken by the Department.

**RELATED
PROCEDURES:**

[400 – Rules of Conduct](#)

[505 – Processing Civilian Complaints Against Department Members and Employees](#)

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