



Littleton Police Department

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Receiving, Documenting, and Investigating Citizen's Complaints

A relationship of trust and confidence between the employees of the Littleton Police Department and the citizens of our community is essential to the successful accomplishment of law enforcement objectives. All department employees are expected to conduct themselves, whether on or off duty, in such a manner as to reflect favorably upon themselves and the department. The consistently high quality of this standard of conduct establishes and maintains the reputation of the Littleton Police Department and encourages the support of the community for police purposes and community goals.

Within the Littleton Police Department the Internal Affairs Investigative Function is delegated primarily to the Deputy Chief of Police. On an as needed basis such investigations may be delegated to the Detective Bureau, and individual officer, or even performed by the Chief of Police.

The Internal Affairs function is important for the maintenance of professional conduct within the Littleton Police Department. The integrity of the department depends on the personal integrity and discipline of each employee. To a large degree, the public image of this department is determined by how well it responds to allegations of misconduct against the department or its officers and the manner in which they are investigated. Towards that end the following procedures shall be followed:

A *General Procedures*

- i. The officer-in-charge of the station at the time the complaint is made shall be responsible for the efficient receiving and complete recording of any complaint of police employee misconduct made by a citizen in person or received by any other means.
- ii. A patrol officer or dispatcher that is contacted by a complainant shall direct that person to a supervisor. Where required, a supervisor will be sent to meet, in the field, with such individual. If there is no supervisor available, the person initially contacted shall attempt to secure sufficient information to complete the complaint form. The form will be forwarded to a supervisor who shall follow-up as appropriate.
- iii. The utmost courtesy and cooperation should be extended to all citizens registering complaints or otherwise inquiring about complaint procedure.
- iv. This initial contact between a complaining citizen and police authorities is a most important stage in the complaint process as the complainant is often tense, angry, and emotionally upset, and the potential for hostility is great.
- v. No person should be denied an opportunity to register a complaint, nor should any such person be directed to return or call back later.
- vi. Every complaint report form shall be given an identifying number, so that the processing of complaints can be carefully monitored. This identifying number will be assigned by the officer-in-charge of Internal Affairs.
- vii. If the substance of the employee misconduct warrants it, the officer-in-charge may place the employee on administrative leave for the remainder of his/her shift pending notification of the Internal Affairs section and the Chief of Police. The employee shall only be relieved

from duty otherwise at the direction of the Chief of Police, or the Deputy Chief, in accordance with statutory and collective bargaining provisions. [52.2.7]

- viii. Failure to record or to properly process a complaint as required by this Policy and Procedure shall be considered misconduct.

B In Person Complaints

- i. Citizens making complaints in person should be requested to read over their completed report, to make any necessary corrections or additions and to sign their complaint.

NOTE: Some citizens have difficulty in writing, may have limited reading skills, and may not be fluent in English. Officers should assist those persons in preparing a complaint form.

- ii. If a complainant refuses to sign a complaint, a notation to that effect should be made on the complaint form.

C Telephone Complaints

- i. Citizens making complaints by telephone should be informed that their signed complaint is requested; however, no telephone complaint should be refused or rejected because the complainant does not wish to sign a complaint form or because [s]he does not wish to be identified. The call should be directed to the officer-in-charge of the station who shall fill out the complaint form based on information received.

D Complaints Received by Mail / Electronic Mail

- i. If a complaint of misconduct or mistreatment by a department employee is received by mail or email, the allegations shall be incorporated in a standard complaint form and the original communication attached thereto.
- ii. If the information so received is insufficient or incomplete, the complainant shall be contacted, if

possible, and informed of the department complaint procedure and any necessary additional information obtained.

E Departmental Complaints

- i. Formal departmental complaints of misconduct against a department employee should be initiated by the preparation of a standard complaint report form. A signed letter with applicable information will also be accepted.

F Complaints by Prisoners

- i. Any prisoner or criminal defendant who alleges misconduct or mistreatment by a department employee shall be advised by the officer-in-charge of the station of his/her right to submit a complaint report form in the usual manner and such complaints should be investigated and processed in the same manner as other citizen complaints. However, in such cases, a signed affidavit setting out the specific basis for the complaint is required.

G Complaints from Governmental Agencies

- i. When information is received or obtained from other governmental agencies alleging specific acts of misconduct against a department employee, this information shall be recorded on a standard complaint report form and an investigation initiated as prescribed in this policy and procedure.

H Street Complaints

- i. If an officer on the street is approached by a citizen regarding a complaint of alleged misconduct against an employee of the police department, the officer shall inform such person that his/her complaint should be directed to the officer-in-charge of the station. The officer will also give the individual an overview of the complaint process.

***I Verification of Receipt* [52.2.4(a)]**

- i. When a complaint is delivered in person at the Littleton Police Headquarters the officer receiving the complaint will ensure that the complainant receives a copy of his/her complaint if they have not already made one. The receiving officer will then request that the complainant place the complaint in a departmental envelope and affix an Internal Affairs Label on the envelope. Once the label has been signed by the complainant and the receiving officer a copy of the envelope shall be made and given to the complainant as a receipt of their complaint. The envelope shall then be placed in the Deputy Chief's mail tray.
- ii. The officer-in charge of Internal Affairs shall send a letter to all persons outside the department that file a complaint, within 3 business days, whether that complaint is delivered in person, over the phone, by email, or through the postal service. This initial letter should confirm receipt of the complaint and provide the Internal Affairs Control Number as well as the investigating officer's name and phone number. The letter should indicate that the complainant should expect to be contacted by the investigator. The letter shall also notify the complainant that he or she will be periodically notified during the investigation and of the final outcome of the investigation.

Note: The following warning will be present on the complaint intake form, and when feasible the officer taking the complaint both orally and in writing will explain the substance of said warning, along with possible implications.

WARNING:

False statements made on this form are punishable under the penalty of perjury. Whoever Knowingly makes a false written statement on this form shall be punished by imprisonment up to 2 years, or face a fine of up to \$2500.00 or both fine and imprisonment M.G.L. 268 S.39 or M.G.L. 269 S.13A. Persons convicted more than once of knowingly making false reports shall be punished by a mandatory minimum one year jail term.

J Periodic Status Reports

- i. In all cases of reporting, except anonymous reports, the complaining party shall periodically receive

information regarding the status of the investigation.
[52.2.4(b)]

- ii. Once the investigation has been completed and delivered to the Chief of Police the Chief shall notify the complainant of that fact and advise them that he shall render his findings within 5 business days. Once those findings are made the Chief will, once again, notify the complainant of them in writing.