



COMPLAINT/COMMENDATION PROCEDURES



GREENHILLS POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Greenhills Police Department can only solve problems within the community with the help of the public. This help and cooperation can be damaged when the public has been, or believes that the police department has treated them improperly or unfairly. It is the job of the administrators and supervisors of the Greenhills Police Department to receive positive feedback on our officers and employees who have done a good job. Conversely, it is our responsibility to investigate complaints in an effort to improve the quality of police service. The following questions and answers are designed to provide information to any person who wishes to make us aware of a positive encounter or file a complaint against the Greenhills Police Department.

WHO CAN FILE A COMPLAINT/COMMENDATION?

Any citizen may make an employee complaint or alert us about an employee's good work. An in-person meeting may be requested, however even anonymous commendations or complaints will be received, and complaints will receive an appropriate investigation.

Complements received or complaints filed against the department or one of its employees shall be handled courteously and professionally. Persons desiring to file a compliment or complaint against an employee of the department may contact any member of the department. You will be directed to the supervisor.

Some complaints can be satisfactorily resolved either by a telephone call or during a visit with the supervisor. The supervisor receiving the complaint will make an assessment of its seriousness, and determine (1) whether the complaint can be satisfactorily handled at that level or (2) whether a written complaint should be filed.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Generally, complaints fall into three categories. They are:

1. *Informal;*
2. *Formal; and*
3. *Internal Affairs*

A complaint is considered informal when it is received and satisfactorily resolved by the supervisor. A formal complaint is more involved and detailed. The complainant will normally receive a written disposition. Finally, a complaint referred to the internal affairs function ensures the integrity of the agency. The criteria for determining the categories of complaints referred to internal affairs include allegations of misconduct such as:

1. *Corruption;*
2. *Excessive use of force that have been reviewed by administrators and found to have possible merit;*
3. *Breach of civil rights;*

4. Criminal misconduct; and
5. Any other inappropriate conduct as determined by the Chief of Police.

Internal affairs complaints are thoroughly investigated and the officers involved in the internal affairs function maintain a close liaison with the prosecutor's office in investigations involving criminal allegations. A written report is usually prepared. It may include recorded statements from the complainant, witnesses, and the accused.

The completed investigative report includes a narrative summary of the events and a finding of fact. The report will not reflect any personal opinion, but rather an unbiased description of the circumstances as they actually occurred.

This allows the department to make a proper resolution, based upon the investigative findings presented. The impact of an internal affairs case on the integrity of the department and the morale of its members necessitate a speedy yet thorough resolution to these issues.

There normally will be a 30-day time limit for completing an internal affairs investigation, with status reports to the Chief of Police every seven days. The Chief of Police may grant extensions in those cases where extenuating circumstances exist.

WILL YOU INVESTIGATE MY COMPLAINT?

The Greenhills Police Department will investigate all complaints against the department or its members. The Greenhills Police Department requires that all public complaints received against an employee are signed by the complainant. The department will however investigate any serious anonymous or unsigned complaint, but if no substantiating evidence is discovered, the complaint shall be considered unfounded.

WHO SHOULD I GO TO FIRST?

In most cases, a complaint will be investigated by the officer's direct supervisor. In many instances, a complaint can be resolved by talking with the supervisor, and in some cases, the supervisor and the officer involved. In other cases, particularly when serious allegations are involved, this may not be possible. In those situations, the most effective way to make a complaint is to either call or come to the Greenhills Police Department weekdays to speak with either the Operations Commander or the Chief of Police. Inform the clerk or officer that you would like to make a complaint, and he/she will put you in contact with the proper person. In all cases, complaint forms are available in the lobby of the Greenhills Police Department or on our website at www.greenhillspd.org 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

DO I HAVE TO COMPLAIN IN PERSON?

No, complaints will be accepted by mail, phone, or e-mail, but you will be asked to give a written statement if you initially call in a complaint by phone and wish to pursue a formal complaint.

IF I AM UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE, DO I STILL HAVE A RIGHT TO COMPLAIN?

Yes, but we prefer that you bring a parent/guardian with you when you come to make a complaint or call with a complaint.

WILL I HAVE TO WRITE OUT MY COMPLAINT/COMMENDATION?

Only if it involves a formal complaint. Sometimes, a complaint can be resolved by talking or meeting with a supervisor. If you would like to pursue the complaint formally, yes. Written complaints tend to contain more detail. If assistance is required to fill out the complaint, someone else may write out the complaint for you.

HOW CLOSELY WILL YOU INVESTIGATE MY COMPLAINT/COMMENDATION?

Complaints will be investigated very closely. We want to find out what went wrong, if anything, and correct the problem so our positive relationship with the public can be enhanced.

CAN I GET IN TROUBLE FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT?

Not if you are telling the truth. It would be both legally improper and unethical to even attempt to bring charges against a person who has filed a complaint in good faith. Section 2921.15 of the Ohio Revised Code makes it a first degree misdemeanor crime to make a false allegation of police officer misconduct if the person knows that the allegation is false. Prosecution may be considered in cases where the complaint is a malicious or false allegation.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE OFFICER?

What happens to the officer or employee depends on the circumstances. If a commendation is involved, the officer will be informed of your input, and may receive a letter of commendation or an award. If the input involves a complaint, the employee will not receive disciplinary action if he or she is exonerated or the complaint is determined to be unfounded or not sustained. The Greenhills Police Department has a disciplinary policy that outlines the types of discipline that can be given to a member of the department. The types of disciplinary action, in ascending order, which can be recommended for a sustained complaint, are:

- 1. Employee counseling;*
- 2. Written reprimand;*
- 3. Recommendation regarding loss of leave;*
- 4. Recommendation to suspend;*
- 5. Recommendation to demote;*
- 6. Recommendation to terminate.*

The Chief of Police or the Chief's designee may contact you when the investigation is completed.

WHAT IF I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE INVESTIGATION?

If you are not satisfied with the results of the investigation, you may contact the Municipal Manager, who supervises the Chief of Police.

