

**CHAPTER 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

1. PURPOSE. This manual is intended to provide guidance on the acceptance, investigation, and final processing of citizens' complaints. Every effort has been made to make this manual a useful and practical guide for the completion of this process. Additional assistance is available from the Bureau of Internal Affairs.
  
2. DEPARTMENTAL PHILOSOPHY.
  - a. It is the policy of this Department that the citizens' complaint process be utilized as a management tool to provide the highest level of public service. The public rightfully expects only the highest standards from our employee, and must have faith that the Department accepts and investigates complaints in an unbiased environment.
  
  - b. This will be accomplished by investigating complaints objectively, supporting employees when allegations are proven invalid, and taking corrective action when necessary. This process provides a means of monitoring employee conduct and attitudes toward the public, and allows for improved operational procedures through the review and analysis of complaint trends.
  
  - c. Application of the policies and directives contained in this manual will also allow the Department to remain in compliance with all applicable laws relating to citizens' complaints.
  
3. COMPLAINT PROCESS OVERVIEW.
  - a. Acceptance. When a citizen complains to the Department, either verbally, in writing, or in person, the complaint will be acknowledged in a timely manner and an investigation will be initiated. As required by law, the complainant will be notified of potential criminal and/or civil penalties for filing false or malicious complaints against peace officers.
  
  - b. Investigation. A thorough, fair, and impartial investigation shall be conducted into complaints received by the Department. This shall be accomplished by gathering sufficient information and evidence to reach a logical conclusion. The investigation will then be documented in a standardized format.

c. Processing. Completed investigations will be approved, filed, and maintained as outlined in this manual. Employees will also be given an opportunity to review the investigation.

d. Closing. All complainants will be notified in writing of the investigation findings. Employees will also be provided with closing documentation, when appropriate.

4. LEGAL FOUNDATION. Refer to annex B for excerpts from applicable statutes that cover citizens' complaints, confidentiality, discovery and Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights (POBR) requirements