

This pamphlet has been prepared to acquaint you with the operation of the North Providence Police Department citizen commendation and complaint process.

The mission of the department is really quite simple – to earn and protect the public trust.

The men and women of the department understand that our greatest resource and asset is the support and assistance given by the community we serve. Naturally, this relationship, or “partnership” as we think of it, with the citizens of North Providence is something we must constantly strive to protect. This is a responsibility shared by every member of the department and it is the primary task of the citizen complaint process.

Here are some of the most common questions and concerns expressed by the public about the citizen’s commendation and complaint process.

COMMENDATIONS

When a commendation is received verbally, it will be documented and forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. Letters of commendation from citizens are posted for all department employees to view. The employees of the North Providence Police Dept. appreciate the effort and consideration of concerned citizens who take the time to commend our employees.

HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Complaints will be accepted from any source and may be made anonymously, in person, or by telephone. While the department does accept anonymous complaints, an investigation generally cannot proceed based solely on anonymous uncorroborated information, unless the allegation can be confirmed by an independent source. Preferably, complaints should be made in person by the individual directly concerned in the allegation against the employee. The department accepts complaints made against police officers,

civilian employees, and other workers and agents of the department. A citizen can initially speak to any supervisor, or the Professional Standards Unit, about an allegation or the complaint process, but the citizen will be referred to the immediate supervisor or the Professional Standards Unit, depending upon the seriousness of the allegation. As part of the investigation, you may be asked to give a sworn statement. An appointment will be made for you, and you are free to bring with you anyone of your choosing. You will be treated courteously and need not fear any type of intimidation or other improper behavior. When making a complaint, simply relate the facts as you know them; don’t attempt to add to or embellish your complaint, and be mindful that you will be asked specific questions regarding factual information

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

If the complaint is for a serious matter, such as unnecessary or excessive use of force, false arrest or violation of a specific criminal statute, the Professional Standards Unit will investigate the complaint. Less serious matters, such as rudeness, discourtesy, and minor infractions of the rules, regulations, policies or procedures will be investigated by the employee’s immediate supervisor. Investigators then forward the findings to the Chief of Police. Based on the results, the complaint can either be sustained or not sustained. If sustained, the Chief of Police will make the final recommendation to the Director of Public Safety for the amount and type of sanction to be imposed upon the employee. Sanctions may include retraining, counseling, reprimand, suspension without pay, transfer, reassignment, demotion, and/or dismissal. All decisions involving disciplinary action will be made in conjunction with the Law Enforcement Officers’ Bill of Rights.

IS SOMETHING DONE ON ALL COMPLAINTS?

Yes. All complaints are initially documented on a *Citizen Complaint Form* and thoroughly examined and investigated consistent with departmental policy and the Law Enforcement Officer’s Bill of Rights.

WHAT DOES THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT DO?

The Professional Standards Unit has the responsibility of investigating:

- Allegations of unnecessary force used by a member of the department in the performance of duty.
- Any allegation of criminal conduct by a member of the department.
- Allegations of false arrest.
- Allegations of serious misconduct or misbehavior.

TO WHOM DOES THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT REPORT TO?

Personnel assigned to the Professional Standards Unit report directly to the Chief of Police.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED?

After your complaint has been investigated, you will be notified of the results by the investigating officer. If you are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, or the specific finding, you may ask that another agency review the investigation. Depending on the type of allegation, you will be informed by our Professional Standards Unit of the most appropriate agency for you to contact. You should also know that making a complaint in no way limits your ability or right to pursue any other complaint

forums if you feel that you have been wronged. Every complaint that involves a possible violation of a law is forwarded to the Attorney General's Department for review.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER COMPLAINTS SUCH AS DISCOURTESY OR POOR SERVICE?

These complaints are investigated by the employee's immediate supervisor and then forwarded to the Divisional Commander for recording, review, and filing.

WHAT RIGHTS DO POLICE OFFICERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES HAVE WHEN A COMPLAINT IS MADE AGAINST THEM?

All police employees are protected under their respective labor agreements and any applicable state and Federal statutes. Additionally, police officers are also protected under the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights. These provisions provide that employees shall not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, threats from supervisors, or unreasonable periods of interrogation. They also have a right to counsel or union representation during the investigation.

IS THERE ANY RISK TO ME WHEN I MAKE A COMPLAINT AGAINST A POLICE EMPLOYEE?

No, unless you deliberately make a false complaint against an officer. In that case, you may be prosecuted criminally and/or be held civilly liable.

WILL THE POLICE REALLY BE IMPARTIAL WHEN THEY INVESTIGATE THEIR OWN OFFICERS OR EMPLOYEES?

Yes, the question goes right to the heart of what professional policing is all about. We strive to ensure quality performance from all our officers and employees who represent our department and the Town of North Providence. We want the public to know that we do not tolerate misconduct. Even perceived tolerance of employee misconduct

will lead to a breakdown of the public trust which would adversely affect the ability of the police department to function properly.

DOES NORTH PROVIDENCE GET MANY COMPLAINTS ABOUT ITS POLICE OFFICERS?

No. Our officers respond to about 30,000 calls for service each year, handle over 60,000 telephone calls, and experience thousands of other service-related interactions between the public and the department's employees. Less than one-half of one percent result in complaints regarding employee's conduct and behavior.

The task of policing today's society is demanding and challenging. The North Providence Police Department will continue to demand the highest standards from its employees. Realizing that it is not possible to enforce the rules of society without incurring some animosity, we will endeavor to protect our employees from unwarranted and false complaints, and protect our citizens from unwarranted and inappropriate mistreatment. Through this entire process, we will work to maintain your trust and support and develop a real working partnership with our community.

North Providence Police Department
Professional Standards Unit
1967 Mineral Spring Avenue
North Providence, RI 02904
(401) 232-7306 Private
Fax (401) 233-1425

Commendation/Complaint forms are also available at www.nppolice.com

NORTH PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Citizen Commendation and Complaint Procedure

*Mayor Charles A. Lombardi
Director of Public Safety*

*Colonel John J. Whiting
Chief of Police*

We are committed to providing a safe and orderly environment in our Town through professionalism, dedication, and active partnerships with the community, and concern for individual dignity.