

Appealing the Outcome of Your Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the decision regarding your complaint, you may file an appeal by contacting the deputy chief of the involved employee. Contact must be made within 14 days of receiving the outcome letter. The letter will contain the name and phone number of the appropriate deputy chief. Your appeal should describe any additional information you have that may change the decision.



False Complaints

The Division of Police is committed to investigating concerns of employee misconduct. Officers can be targets of false complaints by people who seek revenge on them for doing their job. The Ohio Revised Code makes it a first degree misdemeanor to knowingly file a false complaint of misconduct against a peace officer. Please remember, it is not only expensive to investigate false complaints, but it can also affect an officer's career. If evidence clearly indicates an individual has knowingly filed a false complaint against a peace officer, charges will be filed in accordance with O.R.C. 2921.15(B).



The Investigator Assigned to Your Complaint is:

Investigator: _____

Phone: _____

Complaint # : _____

U-10.168 (3/2021)

Columbus, Ohio Division of Police Citizen Complaint System



Fair, Factual, and
Objective

Introduction

The Columbus Division of Police is dedicated to being a trustworthy, diverse, progressive, and community-minded organization devoted to providing excellent public service. The citizen complaint system is available to anyone who believes Division personnel may have made a mistake or engaged in misconduct. The fair, factual, objective, and independent investigation of citizen complaints is a priority of the Division.

What is a Citizen Complaint?

Any allegation made by a citizen that Division personnel may have performed in a manner that is in violation of our rules, the law, and/or the citizen's rights. Examples are:

- An officer or employee was rude
- An officer or employee failed to take a report or the appropriate action
- An officer used too much force during an arrest or confrontation
- An officer or employee committed a crime

Who Investigates Complaints?

All citizen complaints are investigated by the supervisors assigned to the Internal Affairs Bureau or as directed by the Public Safety Director's office. All of the investigators are specially trained to investigate allegations of misconduct against Division employees. These investigators are independent, impartial, and committed to maintaining the integrity of the Division and its dedicated personnel by finding the facts, being transparent, and completing comprehensive investigations. The investigators complete the investigation and make a recommendation as to the finding based on the evidence. It is then sent to the employee's chain of command for review and a final determination by the involved employee's commander or deputy chief.

Filing a Complaint

Step 1

If you believe an officer or employee did something wrong, get the employee's name, badge number, incident number, car number, or other identifying details so we can determine who was involved. If witnesses were at the scene, get their names and contact information. Collect any evidence you believe is related to your complaint. All complaints should be filed within 90 days of the incident; whenever possible.

Complaints made after 90 days may not be investigated unless special circumstances apply. Complaints filed in a timely manner make it easier for Internal Affairs Bureau investigators to obtain evidence, get statements while memories are better, and to reach involved parties.

Note: Complaints about the guilt or innocence of a traffic citation or criminal arrest must be resolved in court and cannot be investigated as a complaint.

Step 2

Contact the Division of Police by one of the following:

- Call **(614) 645-4880**, 24 hours a day. You will speak directly to an Internal Affairs supervisor between the hours of 6:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. who will review your complaint. A Headquarters Operations Section Sergeant will answer your call between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. If your complaint needs an immediate response to collect evidence or witness statements, a supervisor will be sent to the incident location.
- You can file a complaint in person at 750 E. Long Street; between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. daily. You can speak directly with an Internal Affairs Bureau supervisor or complete a citizen complaint form.
- You can send a written complaint by mail, fax, or email. It is important to include your name, address, and phone number so we can contact you about your complaint.

Columbus Division of Police
Internal Affairs Bureau
750 E. Long Street
Columbus, Ohio 43203
Fax: (614) 645-4079
Website: www.columbuspolice.org
Email: IABDeskSgt@columbuspolice.org

Step 3

Upon reviewing your complaint, the Internal Affairs Bureau supervisor may be able to explain the employee's actions to your satisfaction, or refer you to a supervisor who can. If this is the case, the matter will be closed. If your complaint needs to be investigated, it will be assigned to an investigator who will contact you within 5 business days. If you have not been contacted within 5 business days, please call (614) 645-4880 to make sure the investigator has your correct contact information.

Investigation of Your Complaint

The investigator will conduct a detailed investigation of the incident and gather statements from you and witnesses. Your assistance is critical and additional information may be needed.

When the investigation is complete, the investigator will give a written report to the involved employee's chain of command. Their recommendations will be reviewed by a commander or deputy chief and he/she will decide the appropriate outcome. When Division policy has been violated, outcomes may include verbal counseling, additional training, and discipline.

Outcome of Your Complaint

Investigations are typically completed within 90 days after filing the complaint. You will receive a letter by mail stating the outcome of your complaint. Please be aware that a detailed investigation and review of the facts can take time.

Investigations are typically ruled on by the employee's commander or deputy chief within 120 days of the filing. If the complaint requires an extensive investigation, it may take even longer. The investigator will keep you informed of the status and advise you of any unusual delays. You may not be notified about the final outcome for several weeks.