

Complaints against Civilian Employees

The citizen complaint system is designed to allow people to express their concerns about police service. This system provides a fair, factual, and objective review of an individual's concern.

Internal Affairs Bureau

1185 E. Broad St.
Columbus, OH 43203

Hours: Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Introduction to the Compliments & Complaints Procedure

The Columbus Division of Police is committed to providing quality service to all individuals in the City of Columbus. Our work impacts the quality of life in our community. To show our promise to fairness, all employees are sworn to uphold the Division's police code of ethics, rules, policies, directives, and orders and all city, state, and federal laws related to their employment.

Reasoning for Filing a Complaint

First, decide what you think the employee did wrong. For example, do you believe:

- ~ A civilian employee was rude to you?
- ~ A civilian employee violated your rights?

All complaints should be filed as soon as practical to the date of the incident unless there are special circumstances. Complaints filed immediately improve the investigator's chance of gathering factual information.

To file a complaint, contact the Division of Police by one of the following methods:

Telephone: Call (614) 645-4745, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm M-F. A supervisor will speak with you and review your complaint. If after hours, leave a voice message and an IAB Supervisor will call you back during business hours. If your complaint needs an immediate response to collect evidence or witness statements, Contact (614) 645-4580. An Internal Affairs or Division supervisor will be sent to the incident location.

In Person: You can file your complaint in person at 1185 E. Broad St. (43203) Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm daily. You can speak directly with an Internal Affairs supervisor or complete a citizen complaint form.

Mail/Fax/Email:

You can send a written complaint by mail or email to the address below. 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
1185 E. Broad St. Columbus, OH 43203

Email: IABDeskSgt@columbuspolice.org

Upon reviewing your complaint, the 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 given to an investigator who will contact you within 72 hours. If you have not been contacted within 72 hours, please call (614) 645-4745 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 expected and additional information may be needed. If the accusation is serious, you may be asked to take a polygraph test. This does not mean the investigator thinks you are lying, but wants to further prove the truthfulness of your accusation. 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 the appropriate Supervisor and he/she/they will decide the appropriate outcome.

Outcome of Your 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. You may not be notified about the final outcome for several weeks. 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. Most investigations are completed within 50 days after filing the complaint.

Outcome Findings Your investigation will result in one of the following findings:

Sustained – The accusation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence. Depending on the severity of the action, a sustained finding may result in disciplinary action.

Not Sustained – There is not enough evidence to either prove or disprove the accusation.

Unfounded – The alleged conduct is refuted by a preponderance of the evidence.

Exonerated – The accusation is true, but the action taken by the employee was legal and appropriate for the situation.

Unable to Resolve – The investigation was not able to be completed because: 1) Complainant or critical witness lack of cooperation and/or 2) The civilian employee was unavailable or unwilling to submit to the necessary interview. (For example no longer employed by the Division of Police).

Withdrawn – The complainant retracted the allegation(s) through either a verbal or written statement.

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 further information you have that may change the Deputy Chief's decision.

False Complaints - The Division of Police is committed to investigating concerns of employee misconduct. Division civilian employees can be targets of false complaints by people who seek revenge on them for doing their job. The Ohio Revised Code makes it a misdemeanor to knowingly file a false complaint against any Division employee. The Division feels that people need to know the law exists and that when appropriate, the charge may be filed against violators of this law. Please remember, it is not only expensive to investigate false complaints, but can also affect the civilian employee's career. This information is given not to keep people from filing complaints but to inform them of the law.

