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COMPLAINTS

KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



English



Spanish

How to Submit a Complaint

A complaint of misconduct by Sheriff's Office personnel can be made a multitude of ways as described below. You may file a complaint by submitting the Kern County Sheriff's Office Personnel Complaint Form either in person, over the phone, by mail, by electronic mail or by fax. Complaints may be made by anyone, including anonymous complaints.

You may contact the Internal Affairs Unit at the Kern County Sheriff's Office - Support Services Building, 34970 McMurtrey Ave, Second Floor Bakersfield California 93308, or by calling (661) 392-6791 between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays (Holidays excepted). You may also contact the Sheriff's Office Communications Center at (661)861-3110 or any Sheriff's Office substation and request to speak to a supervisor.

Complaint forms are available to the public at every Sheriff's station and Kern County court houses, Kern County libraries and electronically on the Sheriff's Office website (www.kernsheriff.org). The completed complaint form can be sealed in an envelope marked "Internal Affairs" and delivered to any office or substation of the Kern County Sheriff's Office. Personnel complaint forms may also be obtained and returned through the mail or by calling (661) 392-6791. Additionally, you can file a complaint by phone, by calling [\(661\) 392-6791](tel:6613926791) and speaking with an Internal Affairs investigator, or by email at INTERNALAFFAIRS@KERNSHERIFF.ORG. The Sheriff's Office will accept and investigate any complaints sent through social media outlets, or any other non-traditional means of communication.

The following information is requested to process your complaint:

1. Your name, address, and telephone number.
2. The location, date, and time of the alleged incident.
3. The name, address, and telephone number (if available) of all witnesses to the alleged incident.
4. The names or other identification of Sheriff's Office personnel involved.

5. All details of the alleged incident which prompts your complaint.
6. Your signature in the allotted spaces on the complaint form.

Investigative Procedure

Your complaint will be investigated, and you will be advised of the disposition when the investigation has been completed. The investigation process may take up to a year to complete. After completion, all investigative reports are maintained for a period of at least five years. The Kern County Sheriff's Office is committed to a prompt, fair, and thorough investigation of all complaints regardless of how the complaints are submitted. After a formal review of the allegations and investigatory findings, you will receive a close-out letter with one of the following resolutions:

Sustained: The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to prove the allegation made in the complaint. The standard of proof is the preponderance of the evidence.

Not Sustained: The investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegation made in the complaint.

Exonerated: The act or acts, which provided the basis for the allegation or complaint occurred, however, the investigation revealed they were justified, lawful, and proper.

Unfounded: The investigation conclusively proved that the act or acts complained of did not occur, or the member named in the allegation was not involved in the act or acts, which may have occurred. (An allegation may not be unfounded due to the inability to identify the employee who is alleged to have committed the act.)

Unfounded-Frivolous: The investigation determined the complaint made against the employee was frivolous. Frivolous is defined as "totally and completely without merit or for the sole purpose of harassing an opposing party." – California Code of Civil Procedure § 128.5.

During the investigation into the complaint, the investigator may find the employee had committed other acts that violated department policy and procedures and/or State or Federal law. Those violations will be investigated, and a disposition will be rendered for those violations.

The Kern County Sheriff's Office expressly prohibits racial and identity profiling. The Kern County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing services and enforcing laws in a professional, nondiscriminatory, fair, and equitable manner that keeps both the community and deputies safe and protected. Racial or identity profiling is defined as the consideration of, or reliance on, to any degree, actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or mental or physical disability in deciding which persons to subject to a stop or in deciding upon the scope or substance of law enforcement activities following a stop,

except that a deputy may consider or rely on characteristics listed in a specific suspect description. Such activities include, but are not limited to, traffic or pedestrian stops, or actions taken during a stop, such as asking questions, frisks, consensual and nonconsensual searches of a person or any property, seizing any property, removing vehicle occupants during a traffic stop, issuing a citation, and making an arrest.

Retaliation for making a personnel complaint will not be tolerated and is contrary to the mission of the Sheriff's Office. It is encouraged that any retaliatory actions be reported to the Sheriff's Office as soon as practical.

Kern County Sheriff's Office policies and procedures related to the employee complaint process can be found in "Section D" at the following web link:

<https://www.kernsheriff.org/Policies>

If you require physical copies of the Sheriff's Office policies and procedures, copies may be obtained from Sheriff's Headquarters or any Sheriff's Office substation.

[Click Here to File a Complaint Online](#)

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