

Complaints

Complaint Procedure

The Sheriff's Department has always felt that any person making a complaint about the Department or its operations is entitled to a response. Communication is vital to good law enforcement services and to develop community cooperation. The Department has a procedure which can be employed by the community to make complaints concerning Department policies, programs and personnel.

You should first contact the Sheriff's station where the incident occurred. You may also contact the Sheriff's Professional Standards Bureau to file a complaint.

The Complaint Process

You have the right to make a complaint against a police officer for any improper police conduct. California Law requires this agency to have a procedure to investigate civilian's complaints.

You have the right to a written description of this procedure. This agency may find after investigation that there is not enough evidence to warrant action on your complaint. Even if that is the case, you have the right to make the complaint and have it investigated if you believe an officer behaved improperly. Civilian complaints and any reports or findings relating to complaints must be retained by the agency for at least five years.

General Orders Number 108.01

Complaints of Departmental operations and/or personnel shall be thoroughly and accurately investigated.

Procedure

Any person can file a complaint. All complaints will receive immediate attention. Complaints may be made to any employee of the Department. Complaints may be received:

- In person
- By telephone
- In writing
- By completing our online [Civilian Complaint Report](#).

All complaints will be forwarded to the Sheriff's Administration Office. Witnesses of the incident will be contacted. A review of the finding will be made by the Sheriff's Administrative Staff and final disposition made by the Sheriff. Final disposition will be based upon Departmental policy, program and procedure. The Department considers the investigation and disposition as confidential.

Results of Complaints

Results of all complaints will be made known to the complainant, if known, and to the employee involved.

Complaint Disposition Will Be as Follows

- Unfounded - Did not occur.
- Exonerated - Did occur, but was justified.
- Not Sustained - No clear evidence of proof.
- Sustained - Clear evidence of proof.

Filing a False Complaint

A word of caution is offered concerning persons knowingly making false complaints about peace officers. Civil Code 47.5 (View note below) allows peace officers to bring civil action against a person filing a false complaint.

Note: Section 47.5 Civil Code can be found on the California Law Website Section 47.5 Civil Code (Peace Officers; defamation action against person filing false complaint alleging misconduct, criminal conduct, or incompetence)... a peace officer may bring an action for defamation against an individual who has filed a

complaint with that officer's employing agency alleging misconduct, criminal conduct, or incompetence, if that complaint is false, the complaint was made with knowledge that it was false and that it was made with spite, hatred, or ill will.

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