

PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS

The Orange County Sheriff-Coroner Department has a strict policy of maintaining good law enforcement community relations. To achieve this goal, it is imperative that all complaints against members of the department be thoroughly investigated. We want to know when our service needs to be improved and we also want to provide a means for citizens to redress grievances against the departmental members.

The following is information on how to make a formal complaint and answers some commonly asked questions about our procedures.

IN WHAT FORM MAY I MAKE MY COMPLAINT?

Complaints are accepted in writing, and in person. In making a complaint, please use the attached Personnel Complaint form.

WHO WILL INVESTIGATE MY COMPLAINT?

1. Complaints can be handled by the appropriate Division Commander or by our Internal Investigations Unit. Complaints can be lodged during normal business hours at most of our several facilities located throughout the county. If this is impractical, you may telephone Internal Investigations at (714) 647-7468.
2. After normal business hours, complaints can be made to the Sheriff's Watch Commander (714) 647-7000. The Watch Commander will take information regarding the complaint and forward it to the appropriate division.
3. Written complaints will also be accepted. Please use the attached "Personnel Complaint Form." Upon receipt of the written complaint, an investigator or other member of the department may interview you.

IF I WRITE MY COMPLAINT, WHY DO YOU WANT TO TALK TO ME?

The department wants to do a complete investigation of all sincere complaints. Departmental employees are also interviewed, which can lead to a version of events that varies from what is written by a complainant. Fairness to both sides requires that involved parties and witnesses also be interviewed in an attempt to ascertain the truth. Certain facts, recollections, or evidence not originally considered by the complainant could be vital in determining the facts of the incident.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEE?

That will depend on what, if anything, the employee did wrong. If the actions were criminal, the employee will be dealt with like any other citizen. If their behavior was improper but not criminal, the employee may be disciplined by the Sheriff to the degree warranted by the individual situation. Disciplines can range from reprimands through suspensions to termination.

WILL I BE INFORMED REGARDING THE OUTCOME OF THE INVESTIGATION?

Yes. Internal Investigations will mail you a letter within 30 days of the disposition of the case (CPC 832.7).

SHERIFF-CORONER DEPARTMENT
County of Orange
Santa Ana, California

PERSONNEL COMPLAINT FORM

Name of Complainant _____ Date Reported _____

Address _____ City/Zip _____

Residence phone _____ Business phone _____

Date and time of incident _____

Location of incident _____

Name (if known) or description of employee(s) involved:

Name, address, phone number of witness(es):

Summary of complaint:

Per the California Penal Code:

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 CITIZENS' 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. CITIZEN COMPLAINTS AND ANY REPORTS OR FINDINGS RELATED TO COMPLAINTS MUST BE RETAINED BY THIS AGENCY FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS.

This form is available in any of the following languages: Albanian, Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, Dutch, Dari, Farsi, French, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Ilocano, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Lao, Korean, Polish, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Please sign and date this complaint form (or its other language equivalent) and return it to us, so we can proceed with the investigation.

By signing this form, I certify that the statements contained in it are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature

Date

Name (Please print)