

1020.2 AVAILABILITY AND ACCEPTANCE OF COMPLAINTS

1020.2.1 AVAILABILITY OF COMPLAINT FORMS

Citizen complaint forms will be maintained at the front desk of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office and on the Washoe County Sheriff's Office website. Forms may also be available at other government offices and facilities (NRS 289.055(2) relates to commissioned peace officers). Washoe County Sheriff's Office Policy Manual *Personnel Complaints*

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Each Watch Commander shall be responsible for monitoring public satisfaction or inquiries regarding the citizen complaint process and shall forward to the Division Assistant Sheriff/Manager any suggestions for improvement or changes.

1020.2.2 ACCEPTANCE OF COMPLAINTS

All citizen complaints will be courteously accepted by any member of the Office and promptly given to the appropriate supervisor. Although written complaints are preferred, a complaint may also be filed verbally either in person or by telephoning the Office and will be accepted by any supervisor. If a supervisor is not immediately available to take a verbal complaint, the receiving member shall obtain contact information sufficient for the supervisor to re-contact the complainant. The supervisor upon re-contact of the complainant shall complete and submit the Citizen Complaint form as appropriate.

This administration recognizes that some complaints are minor in nature and may be resolved at the lowest level of supervision, without the need for an investigation. In these cases, the supervisor of the member complained of will resolve the issue, document the circumstances in a memorandum form and forward the information to the Division Assistant Sheriff/Manager for review. If the Division Assistant Sheriff/Manager determines no further action is necessary and all parties are satisfied, no further action is required. If the Division Assistant Sheriff/Manager feels additional action should be taken, the information will be forwarded to the Office of Professional Integrity.

Complaints Lodged In Person - Although not required, complainants should be encouraged to file complaints in person so that proper identification, signatures, photographs or physical evidence may be obtained. The following should be considered before taking a complaint:

(a) When the complainant is intoxicated to the point where his/her credibility appears to be unreliable, identifying information should be obtained and the person should be provided with a Citizen Complaint form to be completed and submitted at a later time. However, if the intoxicated person insists on filing the complaint, the complaint shall be taken and properly processed.

(b) When it appears to the member accepting the complaint that the complainant is under the influence, may be suffering from a mental disorder, or there are indications that the complainant displays any other trait or condition that may have bearing on the complainant's credibility, the member shall note these observations and conditions or any other pertinent remarks on the reverse side of the original report. This report will include the observation of any physical marks, injuries or characteristics that may have bearing on the complaint. All such remarks and statements on the reverse side of this report shall

be followed by the signature and commission number of the member making the remarks. This information will not be provided to the complainant.

(c) Depending on the urgency and seriousness of the allegations involved, complaints from juveniles should generally be taken only with their parents or guardians present and after the parents or guardians have been informed of the circumstances prompting the complaint.

(d) The original and first copy of the report will then be placed into a sealed envelope and forwarded to the Office of Professional Integrity.

(e) When an uninvolved supervisor or the Watch Commander determines that the reporting person is satisfied that their complaint required nothing more than an explanation regarding the proper/improper implementation of Office policy or procedure, a complaint need not be taken.

(f) When the allegations of a complaint concern a situation of felonious conduct, excessive force within the previous eight (8) hours, or any other incident considered to be urgent or of significance, the on-duty supervisor will be made aware of the situation and immediately contact a member of the Office of Professional Integrity, in addition to any other command staff which may warrant notification. The member accepting the complaint is still responsible for the initial report even though other investigators may respond. The fact that appropriate notifications have been made will be noted on the reverse side of the original report forwarded to the Office of Professional Integrity.

Complaints Received by Mail - Any member receiving a citizen's complaint by mail will place the complaint and the envelope in a sealed envelope and forward to the Office of Professional Integrity.

Complaints Received by Telephone - Any member accepting a complaint by telephone must complete a Citizen Complaint Report and shall enter on the report, either typed or in the member's own handwriting, all of the pertinent information. In the complainant's signature box, the accepting member shall print or type the words, "telephone complaint".

Once completed, the accepting **member** shall place all of the copies in a sealed envelope and forward to the Office of Professional Integrity. The complainant will be advised that the complaint will be forwarded to the Office of Professional Integrity. If the complainant revealed his or her name, address and telephone number, the complainant will also be advised that a member of this Office will contact the complainant.

The requirements of Complaints Lodged in Person above apply to telephone complaints.