



# Chapel Hill Police Department Report on Professional Standards

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Report 2011 (July-September)



## Lessons Learned

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Generally, the complaints we receive are concerns raised about employee behavior, not service delivery. We treat concerns as a valuable opportunity to improve. During this quarter, in an effort to enhance the quality of service we provide both citizens and employees, Sgt. Josh Mecimore was assigned to the Office of Professional Standards. Sgt. Mecimore will assist the Professional Standards Coordinator with the overall administration and management of criminal and administrative investigations of misconduct by police employees who have allegedly violated laws, regulations, and/or policies. He will also assist with the updating and management of the IA Pro reporting software, which is used to manage the professional standards function. Sgt. Mecimore is charged with compiling monthly and annual reports for submission to the Chief of Police summarizing the nature and disposition of pending and completed internal investigations. It remains a priority to evaluate each of our citizen complaints and contacts in an attempt to improve the level and quality of service we provide to the community.



## Statement of Accountability

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The Chapel Hill Police Department strives to be fair and unbiased in the way we approach all alleged concerns of police misconduct, especially when investigating any concerns raised by citizens. We evaluate each of our citizen complaints and contacts in an attempt to improve the level of service we provide the community. We are the *Guardians of the Hill: Serving, Protecting, Partnering*. Our primary mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community. We will accomplish this through the delivery of the highest level of service and principled enforcement of the law.



## Citizen Complaints

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Citizen complaints are defined as those alleging employee misconduct that rises to the level of a violation of policy and/or an infraction of rules and procedures. All citizen complaints are investigated by the employee's direct supervisor or the Office of Professional Standards, depending on the seriousness and complexity of the alleged violation.

People who work in the police service should behave appropriately at all times. Expectations about the behavior of both police officers and members of police staff are set out in their respective Standards of Professional Behavior. These expectations include requirements to:

- Act with honesty and integrity, fairness, and impartiality
- Treat members of the public and fellow employees with respect
- Not abuse their powers and authority
- Act in a manner that does not discredit or undermine public confidence in police service

Citizens who file complaints are treated respectfully and allegations against police officers are taken seriously. Citizens who wish to express dissatisfaction with members or policies of this Department are provided with information about how to express their dissatisfaction. Citizens who believe they have been mistreated or have not received adequate service have a moral and legal right to express dissatisfaction. Citizen input ultimately helps to improve the department.



## Other Complaints

Citizen contacts may describe an issue of procedure/policy or may refer to a judicial matter for the courts such as a disagreement over a speeding citation. These types of citizen inquiries do not result in an internal investigation. Complaints about the overall policies or procedures of a police force are often referred to as 'direction and control issues'. These can include complaints about the organization of a police force or general policing standards.

## Internal/Administrative Investigations

Internal investigations may review vehicle accidents, vehicle pursuits, police conduct, and performance-related issues. They also review allegations of more serious violations such as excessive use of force and detrimental conduct.

The chart below lists investigations, both those generated externally and internally. Upon completion, each investigation must undergo a final review that includes the Department's Senior Legal Advisor and Chief of Police. All concerns are treated as a valuable opportunity to improve.

| Investigations (Internal and External) |                   |                 |                          |       |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------|
|  | Citizen Complaint | Citizen Contact | Admin/<br>Investigations | Total |
| July-Sept 2010                         | 1                 | 4               | 2                        | 7     |
| July-Sept 2011                         | 1                 | 0               | 2                        | 3     |

| Complaints investigated in 2010 |                   |                 |                          |       |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------|
|                                 | Citizen Complaint | Citizen Contact | Admin/<br>Investigations | Total |
| 2010                            | 7                 | 7               | 12                       | 26    |

**Outcomes Defined:** All complaints are investigated thoroughly and all findings by the Police Chief are based upon the evidence developed during the investigation. The outcomes of investigations are categorized as follows:

- a) **Substantiated:** The evidence is sufficient to prove that the alleged incident occurred and that actions taken by the employee constitute misconduct.
- b) **Unsubstantiated:** The evidence is insufficient to either prove or disprove the facts of the allegation.

- c) Exonerated: The evidence proves that the incident occurred, and the employee's conduct was lawful and/or proper.
- d) Unfounded: The evidence proves that the allegation is false and not factual.
- e) Administratively Closed: The complaint or investigation is closed prior to reaching a finding. Examples may include withdrawal of the complaint by the complainant or an employee leaving Town employment prior to the completion of the investigation.