



Chapel Hill Police Department Report on Professional Standards

Quarterly Report 2012- July-Sept

Statement of Accountability

The Chapel Hill Police Department is dedicated to protecting the rights of all citizens and we carefully investigate all complaints relating to police service and/or police misconduct. Policing is often difficult and complex. We strive to be courteous, thorough, and impartial in our investigations and fair in our judgments. 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.



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



Citizen Complaints and the Investigative Process

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. 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.

In the course of the investigation all witnesses as well as officers are interviewed. An investigator's summary report that includes all statements, findings of fact, recordings if available or any other pertinent evidence is compiled and submitted for review. During that review, each member of that officer's chain of command is tasked with reviewing the investigation for accuracy and completeness. During this review,

the supervisor makes his or her own recommendation for discipline, if any. Once the report is reviewed by each member in the officer's chain of command, it is then submitted to the Department's Senior Legal Advisor for review before ultimately making its way to the Chief of Police who then makes his final recommendation.

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/ Investigations	Total
July-Sept 2011	1	0	2	3
July-Sept 2012	1	5	1	7

Types of Allegations	Demeanor	Improper Conduct	Use of Force
	1	5	1

In reference to the above chart, a total of one demeanor related concern, five allegations of improper conduct, and one allegation of use of force were documented for review. In one allegation of improper conduct, the finding was substantiated and the officer received the appropriate counseling. The allegation of excessive force is still open pending further investigation. The administrative investigation has been completed and is pending supervisory review. In the remaining incidents, officers were exonerated of any wrongdoing or the incidents were labeled as unfounded.

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.



Lessons Learned

Generally, the complaints we receive are concerns raised about employee behavior, not service delivery. We treat concerns as a valuable opportunity to improve. Consistent with the previous quarter, there was an increase in citizen contacts which again is believed to be reflective of specific policy changes regarding the receiving and documenting of complaints. The Office of Professional Standards continues to monitor these types of interactions and is evaluating the need for specific training regarding the delivery of services to our community.