



Chapel Hill Police Department Report on Professional Standards

Quarterly Report 2013

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
Jan - March 2012	0	8	3	11
Jan - March 2013	1	2	3	6

Types of Allegations	Harassment	Improper Conduct	Unsatisfactory Job Performance
	2	2	2

In reference to the above chart, a total of two harassment related concerns, two allegations of improper conduct, and two allegations of unsatisfactory job performance were documented for review. Both unsatisfactory job performance investigations have been completed and are pending recommendations. One of the investigations into improper conduct resulted in the complaint being unfounded and the other remains open pending recommendations from the employee's chain of command. The remaining harassment allegations involved citizen contacts and in each incident the allegations were 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. It is important to note for the reported quarter, there were no demeanor allegations. We hope this will be a continued trend in an area that we continue to address through employee training and mentoring. Overall citizen complaints/investigations decreased compared to the same quarter in 2012. Increased supervisory accountability and training remain important emphases and we will continue to treat all complaints as an opportunity to improve. The Office of Professional Standards continues to monitor all interactions and investigations to recognize trends and to evaluate the need for specific training regarding the delivery of services to our community.