



Chapel Hill Police Department Report on Professional Standards

Quarterly Report 2012

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 and decision-making. 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 made clear in our policies and procedures. 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 rise 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 our department.

In the course of the investigation, all witnesses, as well as involved employees, 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, completeness, and compliance with Town and Departmental policies and procedures. 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. Such contacts are often resolved after a conversation with the citizen occurs.



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 or detrimental personal conduct.

The chart below lists investigations 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 2011	1	4	2	7	
Jan-March 2012	0	8	3	11	

Types of Allegations	Demeanor	Improper Conduct	Harassment	Use of Force	Improper Arrest
	3	5	1	1	1

In reference to the above citizen contacts, a total of three demeanor related concerns were raised during this reporting period; three allegations of improper conduct, one allegation of harassment, and one allegation of improper arrest. In each instance, officers were exonerated of any wrongdoing. During the same reporting period, there were also 3 internal administrative investigations for improper conduct completed. The findings in 2 out of 3 of the investigations were substantiated. In the third investigation, the officers were exonerated.

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. Generally, this occurs only if the complaint is withdrawn by the original complainant.



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. We will conduct a supervisory training series later this year, during which we will provide additional training for our supervisors on counseling, coaching, and mentoring our employees, as well as enhanced training on conducting internal investigations.