

CHESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

Citizen Complaint Procedure



Complaint Dispositions

Unfounded - The incident did not occur, or the officer wasn't involved

Exonerated - Incident occurred, but officer acted lawfully and proper.

Inconclusive - Insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation

Sustained - Allegation is supported by sufficient evidence

In all cases, the officer is notified of the disposition.

If a complaint is sustained, there are several levels of discipline that can occur, the first and foremost is officer counseling, and/or training.

The intent of all discipline is to deter unacceptable conduct and therefore we encourage the use of positive measures as compared to punitive measures to solve problems. It is understood that punishment may have to be administered dependent upon nature and severity of the misconduct.

Negative disciplinary action can result in verbal or written reprimand, suspension, and dismissal.



Complaint Procedure Summary:

1. Call or visit the police department and speak with the Officer in Charge
2. Complaint is processed and investigated
3. The investigation or inquiry is reviewed
4. Chief of Police and the Town Manager makes final disposition
5. Involved officer and complainant are notified of result of complaint

www.chestervt.gov

802.875.2035

Who May Complain and How

Any citizen who feels that they have knowledge of police corruption or misconduct is encouraged to use the Chester Police Department Complaint Procedures.

A complaint may be made by contacting the police department officer-in-charge either in person or by phone. The Officer in-charge will document the complaint and determine the manner in which the complaint will be handled according to policy. Complaints may also be made directly to any one of the command staff during normal business hours.

Internal Affairs

The function of Internal Affairs is to protect the integrity of the Chester Police Department and its personnel, both sworn and non-sworn.

It is the goal of the Citizen Complaint procedure that the rights of all citizens and employees be protected. Police officers must be free to exercise their best judgment and initiate action in a reasonable, lawful, and impartial manner without fear of reprisal. A proper relationship between the police and the relationship between the police and the citizens of Chester must be fostered by trust and confidence which is essential to effective policing.

This system of complaint and disciplinary procedures not only subjects officers to corrective action when behaving improperly, but also protects them from unwarranted criticism when discharging their duties properly

What Should Be Reported

Police behavior that can be subject to citizen complaints include:

Corruption, such as:

- Theft
- Bribery
- Acceptance of gratuities

Misconduct, such as:

- Excessive Force
- Unlawful arrest
- Harassment
- Rudeness

****Making false or misleading reports against officers or other employees may be cause for criminal and/or civil action against those complaining.****

All citizen complaints are investigated, some by first line supervisors and others by assigned investigators.

Before any complaint is handled in a formal manner, the complaining party must be willing to complete a written statement and complete a complaint affirmation citing the truthfulness and accuracy of the information/complaint.

Although complaints can be made anonymously, these complaints are scrutinized by a committee of employees and the complainant must still identify themselves to the Chief of Police. Anonymous complainant's information will be released to the accused officer if the complaint is found to be without merit and defaming to the employee.

Completed formal investigations are reviewed for completeness and referred to the Chief of Police for final evaluation. Prior to making a final decision, the Town Manager will review the complaint.

Our core values include:

Integrity

Teamwork

Professionalism

Dedication to Duty

Respect

Loyalty

Fairness