



Ocean City Police Department
Standard Operating Procedure

S.O.P. – ADM 005

Effective: 01/08/2016

Subject: Documenting Citizen Complaints

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I. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a standard practice to capture information regarding citizen complaints filed against Department employees. General Order 200 D-1 details the responsibilities associated with citizen complaint resolution. This policy addresses the mechanics associated with documentation and retention of complaint resolution.

II. Definitions:

- A. **BlueTeam:** Software utilized by the Department to securely manage administrative documentation of citizen complaints.
- B. **Complaint:** Allegation(s) of misconduct made against any employee of the Department.
- C. **Inquiry:** A question by a citizen regarding law, police tactics, Department policies and procedures, or dissatisfaction at an enforcement action that does not allege misconduct. Inquiries do not constitute a “complaint” and do not normally require documentation. Some inquiries may be documented if it is determined that it is in the best interest of the Department or other parties.
- D. **Misconduct:** Any violation of law, Department policy, procedure, practice, or other inappropriate performance that violates clearly established rules or expectations of the Department.

III. Policy:

All citizen complaints shall be handled as outlined in G.O. 200 D-1, Section “V” titled “Citizen Complaints”. Documentation of the complaint shall be recorded utilizing BlueTeam web based software under the citizen complaint module. This module provides a secure and segregated database of citizen complaints and their outcome.

The citizen complaint module may serve as the sole documentation of a complaint, but will not replace investigative needs required in an internal investigation. The documentation of citizen complaints in BlueTeam shall be a Command responsibility.

IV. Procedures - Complaint Documentation

- A. When an investigation into a citizen complaint has been concluded, the Commander will login to the BlueTeam software and;
 - 1. Select “Add New Incident”, then select “Citizen Complaint” as the incident type, OR
 - 2. Select the incident that has been entered and assigned by the Office of Professional standards by clicking “Edit”



- B. The following fields shall be completed on the “Incident Details” page of the module:
1. Incident number associated with the complaint if known or applicable.
 2. Date Received
 3. Date & Time of occurrence if known
 4. Address of the occurrence if known
 5. After entering the above information the Commander shall select “Next”
- C. Summary of Incident:
1. The Commander will provide the details of the complaint as reported by the complainant and a detailed summary of the investigation, findings, and recommendation, or
 2. If the summary is contained in a Form 95, the Commander shall enter **“See attached Investigation”** and shall attach the form 95 electronically to the BlueTeam entry as described below.
 3. After entering the above information the Commander shall select “Next”
- D. Reporting Party: The Commander will choose “Citizen” then select “Next”.
- E. Reporting Citizen Information: The Commander shall search the BlueTeam database for the reporting citizen.
1. If the citizen is found the Commander shall select the citizen and should ensure that the current address and contact information of the citizen is present and accurate. If necessary the Commander will “Add Address” and/or “Add Phone #” ensuring to select “save” after each entry.
 2. If the citizen is not found then the Commander shall
 - a. Select “No Match” and complete the personal identifying information for the citizen to include, name, date of birth, gender, race, and e-mail address and then select “Save”
 - b. Select “Add Address” and “Add Phone #” and complete the entries ensuring to select “save” after each entry.
 3. When these steps are complete the Commander shall select “Finished”.



- F. Incident Links: The Commander shall add information to the entry concerning:
1. Charges against the complainant if applicable
 2. Involved Officer(s) and associated allegations that best describe the nature of the complaint as reported.
 3. Citizen and Officer Witnesses

After entering the above information the Commander shall select "Next"

- G. Attach Files: The Commander may attach any applicable digital files to the entry and then select "Next" (Form 95's, CAD/Incident Reports, photographs, etc.)
- H. Mark Incident Complete:
1. When all applicable data has been entered, the Commander shall select "Mark Incident Complete". This will forward the incident to the Office of Professional Standards (OPS).
 2. If the incident was assigned by the OPS, the Commander should select "Mark Complete" and then select "Forward to Prof. Standards".

V. Office of Professional Standards Responsibilities

- A. The OPS will review all entries made in the Citizen Complaint Module for completeness and accuracy.
- B. If there are any questions regarding the information collected, the methods used to resolve the complaint, or recommendations made by the investigating supervisor, the OPS will communicate with the Commander.
- C. Complaints requiring additional investigation shall be assigned back to the shift/section/unit Commander for further action or may be completed by the OPS.
- D. Once the review process has been completed, the OPS shall close the citizen complaint with the appropriate finding. The Chief of Police shall have final approval of all matters associated with investigation protocols and disciplinary measures.
- E. The OPS will keep Division Commanders and the Chief of Police informed of active complaints and their resolutions.

References: General Order 200 D-1			
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