

COMPLIMENTING AN EMPLOYEE

As we recognize that conflicts between citizens and agency employees can arise, we also realize that there are times when employees go above and beyond their call for duty. Law Enforcement employees, like everyone else, appreciate it when their good deeds are noticed. Too often they are remembered for the traffic tickets they issue or the arrests they have to make, and not for the thousands of helping hands they extend.

If a member of the Harlingen Police Department provides services that you feel they should be commended for, please write the Chief a letter or note to that effect, giving your feelings on what the Officer or employee has done that deserves commendation. The Chief will see that it gets to the employee and that a copy is placed in the employee's personnel file. This boosts their morale and encourages all department personnel to be more positive about themselves and the service they provide. We are proud of the good relationship we share with the community and strive toward continued excellence in police service.

HARLINGEN POLICE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

“To protect life, property, the constitutional rights of individuals, and promote a feeling of security within the community through the prevention and deterrence of crime, and the apprehension of law offenders, while providing total quality police service.”



Harlingen Police Department

1102 S. Commerce P.O. Box 1631 Harlingen, Texas 78550



CITIZEN COMPLAINT & COMMENDATION PROCEDURES

HARLINGEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR COMPLAINT

The Harlingen Police Department recognizes that its employees are responsible for their conduct where the public is concerned. The Department also acknowledges that, at certain times, conflicts between citizens and agency employees can arise. It is essential to the safety of our community that the relationship between police and citizens be built on confidence and trust. Law enforcement can not be effective without this vital conviction by both entities.

Police Officers must be free to exercise their best judgment and initiate proper action in a reasonable, lawful, impartial manner, without fear of reprisal. At the same time, they must observe the rights of all people. The complaint process and appropriate disciplinary procedures not only subject agency members to corrective action when they conduct themselves improperly, the guidelines also protect them from unwarranted criticism when they discharge their duties in good faith.

A disagreement over the validity of a traffic citation is not a complaint. Such disagreements should be directed to the court that has jurisdiction in the matter.

The Police Department realizes that confusion, different perceptions, or the timeliness of information will sometimes result in descriptions that produce differing accounts of the same incident. Beyond legitimate error, however, the deliberate making of a report that the complainant knows to be false or misleading could constitute a violation of State Law.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The complaint process is designed to deal with each case factually and fairly. Citizens who file complaints are treated respectfully and their accusations are taken seriously. All complaints are investigated thoroughly and all findings are based on impartial evidence gained during the investigation.

However, many complaints can be explained satisfactorily by a visit or telephone call to the employee's supervisor. The supervisor will talk with you about your complaint and try to resolve it.

Complaints may be lodged as a Formal or Informal Complaint. The Formal Complaint must be in writing and signed by the complainant. The Informal Complaint may be written or oral.

All complaints will be dealt with in the same manner. Formal complaints will be responded to in writing once the investigation is completed.

Citizens feeling that they have a legitimate concern may make a formal complaint to the Harlingen Police Department at anytime by contacting any member of this department for information on the complaint process. Additional information about this process may be obtained by calling the Internal Affairs Division at (956) 427-8750.



DISPOSITIONS

Any complaint can be made anonymously without giving your name. However, you cannot be informed of the internal review's results if you choose to remain anonymous. After a thorough investigation, the complaint will be classified into one of the following dispositions:

Unfounded: Incident did not occur, or affected employee was not involved.

Exonerated: Incident occurred, but actions taken were lawful and proper.

Not Sustained: Insufficient evidence exists to prove the allegation.

Sustained: Evidence is sufficient to prove the allegation.

Sustained allegations could result in additional training, counseling, written reprimand, suspension or termination.

Although employees named in a complaint will at some point be required to respond to the specific allegation, they are not permitted access to cases under investigation. Complainants need not be concerned that they will be subject to retribution for legitimately stating a complaint because procedures are in place to prevent this occurrence.

Complainants who have current criminal or traffic charges pending should be aware that the internal review process deals solely with department policy matters and the conduct of agency employees. Regardless of the status of an internal investigation, existing criminal or traffic charges must be disposed with through the proper courts.