

What is an Internal Affairs Investigations?

The process of gathering facts to prove, or disprove, allegations of misconduct against Department employees.

Who will investigate my complaint?

Your complaint will be taken by a Lieutenant or Sergeant. If the complaint is resolved, no other action will be taken. If further action is warranted, the complaint is processed through the Internal Affairs Unit for tracking purposes, and assigned to the employee's supervisor or the Internal Affairs Unit to investigate.

What types of complaints does the Columbia Police Department recognize?

Both "informal" and "formal" complaints are recognized. An "informal" complaint is a minor issue that may be handled by the employee's supervisor with no other action. A "formal" complaint is any complaint that is not an informal complaint, and is handled through official channels and documentation.

How can I assist in making a complaint?

- Complete a "Citizen's Complaint Form", which is a written complaint to express your concerns.
- Provide an address and contact number.

How will I know when the investigation into my complaint is complete?

You will be notified by letter of the outcome or "disposition" of your complaint within 30 days of the final findings.

What if I have more questions?

You may contact the Internal Affairs Unit at (803)545-3936.

MISSION STATEMENT

"Establish relationships, build public trust, and earn citizen confidence while reducing crime, to make Columbia the safest City in South Carolina."



An Internationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency

#1 Justice Square
Columbia, South Carolina 9201

COLUMBIA
POLICE
DEPARTMENT

CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROCESS

The Columbia Police Department strives to provide professional service. Citizen input, both positive and negative, is vital to our organizational goals.



#1 Justice Square
Columbia, South Carolina 9201

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COLUMBIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Citizen Complaint Process



What is a complaint?

A complaint is defined as:

An allegation of circumstance(s) mounting to a specific act or omission which, if proven true, would amount to employee misconduct; or

An expression of dissatisfaction with a policy, procedure, practice, philosophy, service or legal standard of the agency.

Misconduct is an act or omission by an employee, which, if proven true, would normally result in some form of discipline or sanction. This would include:

Commission of an unlawful act

Neglect of duty

Violation of any department policy, procedure, rule or regulation or training procedure; or

Conduct that may unfavorably reflect upon the employee or agency.

Who can make a complaint?

The Columbia Police Department accepts complaints against any of its employees and will investigate all these complaints to the appropriate disposition. A complaint can come from either an external or internal source, and can be accepted from:

Individual aggrieved people

A third party

A governmental agency

An anonymous person

Employing agencies

Human rights complaints

How do I file a complaint?

You may file a complaint in person, or by writing to the Columbia Police Department at #1 Justice Square, Columbia, SC 29201. You may contact Internal Affairs at (803)545-3936. Go to www.columbiapd.com and fill out an online complaint form.

What to expect

Complaint investigations can be lengthy depending on the number of witnesses and the seriousness of the allegations. The Columbia Police Department makes every effort to complete investigations within 30 days. Additional time is then required for review and determining a disposition of the allegations of misconduct.

Dispositions

After all evidence and testimony are obtained, the investigator files a report which is reviewed by command staff.

The Chief of Police reviews the completed investigation and then decides on one of the four dispositions.

Sustained: The employee has committed the act, or acts, of misconduct alleged in the complaint.

Not Sustained: There is insufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegations made.

Exonerated: The act occurred but the act was justified, lawful, and proper, or the complaint is satisfied with an explanation of the incident and requests no further action taken.

Unfounded: The allegations were without basis.

Policy

It is the policy of this department to ensure that integrity is maintained through an internal system whereby objectivity, fairness, and justice are assured by intensive and impartial investigation and review to clear the innocent, establish guilt of wrongdoers, and to facilitate fair, suitable and consistent disciplinary action.

You will be informed of only the final disposition of the complaint. If the case is to be found sustained in your nature, you will not be told of the action(s) taken against the employee. This information is not public.

Employee rights

Typically complaints reflect legitimate concerns, however, occasionally a complaint is fictitious and made with malice. Police Officers also have the right to review and respond to allegations of misconduct, as well as proposed discipline resulting from such allegations.

Community involvement

Please remember the Columbia Police Department is here to serve and assist our citizens. As such, we value your input concerning our ability to serve the public properly. We encourage anyone to contact us when they have a complaint or concern. With your help, we can work together to improve our community.

CHIEF OF POLICE
Chief Tandy P. Carter
Columbia, South Carolina 29201