



**INFORMATION
REGARDING YOUR
COMPLAINT**

Supervisor taking your complaint:

Date reported: _____

Supervisor investigating your complaint:

Employee(s) involved, if known:

Comments:

Emergency: 911
Professional Standards: 480-350-8047
Information: 480-350-8311
Email: internalaffairs@tempe.gov

*Protecting Your Rights
Is Our Business*

**A GUIDE
TO THE CITIZEN
COMPLAINT
PROCESS**

A message from the Chief...

Police officers are sworn to protect the rights of all people regardless of race, age, sex, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, citizenship, ethnicity, or economic status. This applies to those who are taken into police custody as well.

The men and women of the Tempe Police Department take this charge seriously, and for that reason we have adopted internal safeguards to discourage abuses of authority by police employees.

If you feel that an employee of this department has acted in an unprofessional manner towards you or others, I encourage you to report that employee to a police supervisor.

The information in this brochure will assist you in doing that. Our goal is to provide you with quality police service in a spirit of community cooperation. You help us improve and continue that service when you report any police performance to us.

Kenneth McCoy
Chief of Police



MISSION STATEMENT

"The Tempe Police Department in partnership with the citizens of Tempe is committed to improving the quality of life in our City by identifying and resolving public safety concerns."

► Our policy

It is the policy of the Tempe Police Department to thoroughly investigate all complaints against its employees as part of our commitment to maintaining the public's confidence and trust. All such investigations are conducted in a fair and expeditious manner in accordance with department, state, and federal laws and regulations.

► Who may complain?

Any person who witnesses or has direct knowledge of police misconduct may file a complaint with the Tempe Police Department. The person need not have been personally involved to do so. Parents may also file a complaint on behalf of juveniles, should the juveniles not feel comfortable making the complaint themselves.

► Responsibility: *Ours and Yours*

The Police Department views all citizen complaints against its employees very seriously, and actively pursues investigations into misconduct. For this reason, you must ensure that your complaint is based on fact. False reporting is an attempt to unjustly subject a police employee to undeserved discipline or slander or place his or her employment in jeopardy and can result in criminal charges and/or civil suit by the employee involved.

► When should you complain?

Contact the Department if you witness any behavior by a department employee which is contrary to department policy, is a violation of city, state or federal law, involves the excessive use of force, or involves discourteous or abusive behavior or abusive treatment.

► How do you file a complaint?

Generally, complaints are filed through the supervisor of the employee involved. If you do not know the name of the employee involved, you may contact any police supervisor. Complaints can be filed in person, by mail, by telephone or electronically through either e-mail or via the Tempe Police Department webpage.

► Who investigates the complaint?

Department supervisors are charged with the maintenance of discipline and with overseeing the conduct of employees assigned to their charge. In most cases, the supervisor of the employee conducts the investigation and reports the incident through the chain-of-command for disposition. In more serious incidents, the investigation is conducted by the Department's Professional Standards Bureau, which investigates incidents that could result in demotion or dismissal, or where criminal charges may be involved.

► What is the complaint procedure?

The investigating supervisor interviews all witnesses and parties involved. The disposition falls into one of the following categories:

Sustained - allegation is supported by sufficient evidence to justify a reasonable conclusion of guilt.

Not Sustained - insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation.

Exonerated - the alleged activity occurred as reported, but was lawful and proper under the circumstances.

Unfounded - the allegation is false or without merit.

► What will you be told?

You will be advised of the supervisor's findings and whether disciplinary action will be taken.

► Our Commitment to you

Courteous and professional police service and a prompt and objective response to complaints. The Tempe Police Department has an excellent service record and we hope that your contacts with our employees are positive. If not, we will endeavor to resolve your complaint to your satisfaction. Of course we would like to hear from you when we have provided you with commendable service too!

► How can I Appeal?

If you are not satisfied with the findings of the citizens complaint investigation in other than sustained complaints, you may appeal the findings to the Tempe Citizens' Panel for Review of Police Complaints and Use of Force. This appeal must be made within 30 days of being notified of the investigative findings, and must include a written statement indicating the reason(s) for the appeal. Contact the Department's Professional Standards Bureau for directions at 480-350-8047.

► Will my citizen complaint affect any criminal proceedings against me?

No. While we encourage you to report any perceptions of wrong-doing on the part of our employees, the initiation of an administrative investigation will not have any bearing upon (or delay) any criminal prosecution without a judge's approval. Oftentimes, it is a person's belief that filing a complaint against a police employee will assist and/or delay a criminal proceeding in which they are a party. This is not the case and it is your responsibility to be responsive to all criminal court appearance dates, orders of the court, and advice from your defense attorney and/or instructions given to you by a judge.