The Fort Worth Police Department

is dedicated to providing the best police service possible to all Fort Worth citizens. Police officers are carefully selected and given the best training available in order to provide this service. However, you may have occasion to lodge a complaint about the actions of a member of the Fort Worth Police Department. In order to be responsible to you, we are providing the following information about how complaints are made, how they are investigated, and their possible results.

How are complaints made?
A complaint may be lodged with the Fort Worth Police Department’s Internal Affairs Division which is located on the second floor of the Thomas R. Windham Building, 350 West Belknap Street, or with any supervisor in the police department. State law requires that complaints against police officers be in writing and signed by the person making the complaint. For future reference, the name and identification number of the supervisor with whom the complaint is initially discussed should be obtained.

The Internal Affairs office is staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Complaints may also be made in person or by phone at any of the Patrol Division facilities. Documentation of all complaints will be made and forwarded to the Internal Affairs Division.

All complaints will be investigated. If the complaint involves officers from more than one division, a violation of a criminal law or use of excessive force, the Internal Affairs Division will investigate. Otherwise, complaints are investigated by the officer’s immediate supervisor.

When the complaint is against a policy of the police department or the enforcement of a particular law, the policy or law will be explained; however, the officer will not be investigated unless the complainant indicates the officer violated departmental policy, procedure, or regulations during the incident. If a complaint is regarding a policy, it will be reviewed for possible revision.

What time limits do I have to make a complaint?
A complaint should be made in a timely manner after the incident so that the details are readily available to the investigating supervisor and prompt action can be focused to correct and/or discipline an officer acting in an unacceptable manner.

According to state law, the police department’s receipt of the complaint, investigation, and beginning of discipline of the officer must be completed within 180 days after the occurrence of the act. For criminal matters, the time frame is 180 days from the discovery of the act.

What are the possible outcomes of a disciplinary investigation?
After the investigation into the officer’s actions is complete, the complaint will be categorized as one of the following:
1. Unfounded – the complained-of act did not occur.
2. Exonerated – the complained-of act occurred but was lawful and proper.
3. Not sustained – there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the complaint-of act.
4. Sustained – there is sufficient evidence to conclude the complaint-of act occurred.

The supervisor completing the investigation will make the initial conclusion; however, the entire incident and conclusion will be reviewed by the supervisor’s chain of command through the Chief of Police. The chief has final authority on disciplinary complaints.

What happens when a complaint is sustained?
When the investigation establishes that the charges are sustained, one of the following actions may be taken against the officer, depending on the nature of the violation:
1. Reprimand the employee.
2. Suspend the employee without pay.
3. Demote the employee.
4. Discharge the employee.

What happens if the complaint is not sustained?
Police officers must be afforded certain rights, the same as with all citizens, and complaints must be supported by sufficient evidence. If there is not sufficient evidence to sustain the complaint, the officer is notified and no disciplinary action is taken against the officer.

Officers can appeal the decision.
In accordance with state law, police officers can appeal disciplinary action taken against them. The Fort Worth Police Department is a civil service department which means that an officer can make an appeal of any disciplinary action with the city Civil Service Commission or request that it be reviewed by an independent hearing examiner.

What if you are not satisfied with the decision?
If you are not satisfied with the results of an investigation of your complaint of employee misconduct, you may appeal to:
1. The Office of the Chief of Police, located at 350 West Belknap St.
2. The Office of the City Manager, located at the Fort Worth Municipal Building, 1000 Throckmorton Street.

The Fort Worth Police Department is vitally interested in the welfare of all its citizens and in taking action when its employees have been proven derelict in their duties or are guilty of wrongdoing. If it becomes necessary for you to make a complaint, you can be assured that it will be given a fair and thorough investigation. By the same token, if you have occasion to see a police officer doing outstanding work, tell us about it. Your Fort Worth Police officers are dedicated to serving you and your community.

TIPS
1. In general, it is worthwhile to file a complaint, even if you are unsure of the strength of your case or the outcome of the investigation, since Internal Affairs maintains files on individual officers in which each separate allegation is listed. Remember: if you feel you have been mistreated or unnecessarily harassed, it is your responsibility to file a formal complaint.
2. Get the police officer’s name and identification number. They are required to give this information to you if you ask.
3. While still at the location, find as many witnesses as you can. Get their names and phone numbers. Ask them to write down what they saw and get copies of their statements.
4. If you cannot find witnesses at the scene, go back at the same time of day and hold a sign asking people if they saw what happened. Someone may be willing to come forward afterwards.

In the event that you are injured, see a doctor immediately and get written copies of your
medical records. As a family member or friend to take a photograph of any visible injuries.

5. As soon as possible, write down everything you remember about what transpired. It is advisable to bring in your complaint already written or typed because writing it at the Internal Affairs office can be distracting.

Spare no detail. Include your recollection of exactly what was said, and what actions followed. Note the precise location, date, time of day, weather conditions and any pertinent events leading up to the incident.

Be honest. In the event you or other victims were under the influence of intoxicants, note that as well.

Detailed documentation lends credibility, so do not leave anything out.

Make a copy of your written statement if you prepare it before meeting with the investigator. Copies of documents prepared in the Internal Affairs office, or of documents turned over to Internal Affairs, may only be obtained by written request and pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act.

6. Call to check on your investigation periodically. Police departments will not generally comment on an ongoing investigation, but it is a good idea to keep track of their progress.

7. If you are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, you may want to file a follow-up complaint with the U.S. Justice Department, through the Federal Bureau of Investigation. But note that you will be asked to furnish personal background information such as place of birth, occupation, and prior arrests.

At All Times:

Keeps a file with copies of everything pertaining to your case.

Keep a written log of who you talk to, the date, and what was said.

Keep track of the progress of your case.

Complaints Against Fort Worth Police Officers

Useful Addresses and Telephone Numbers:

Fort Worth Police Department 817-392-4000
350 West Belknap Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102

Chief of Police 817-392-4210
350 West Belknap Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102

Internal Affairs Division 817-392-4270
350 West Belknap Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102

Central Division 817-392-3900
500 E Jones
Ft Worth, TX 76102

North Division 817-392-4600
2500 N. Houston Street
Fort Worth, TX 76106

East Division 817-392-4800
5650 E. Lancaster Avenue
Fort Worth, TX 76112

South Division 817-922-3400
3128 West Bolt Street
Fort Worth, TX 76110

West Division 817-392-4700
3525 Marquita Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76116