

2-100.00 Citizen Complaint Policy & Procedure

MN RULES 6700.2200 THROUGH 6700.2600

POLICY

It is the policy of the Goodview Police Department that any person who believes that an employee of this agency has acted improperly may bring a complaint to the chief law enforcement officer's attention pursuant to the following procedure

- A. A relationship of trust and confidence between Department members and the community they serve is essential for effective law enforcement. Law Enforcement officers must be free to exercise their best judgment and to initiate enforcement action in a lawful and impartial manner without fear and reprisal. While at the same time they must meticulously respect individual rights.
- B. This complaint procedure is intended to provide corrective action when a department member conducts himself/herself improperly, and to protect him/her from unwarranted criticism when he/she discharges his/her duties properly.
- C. Any person who believes that a law enforcement act is improper is encouraged to bring the complaint to the department's attention.
- D. The department will make every effort to ensure that no adverse consequences occur to any person or witness who brought a complaint or provided information in any investigation of a complaint.
- E. Complaints shall be handled in a prompt, just, open and expeditious manner in accordance with these procedures. Summaries of the complaint process and copies of these procedures shall be made available to the public upon request.

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy the terms set forth below are defined as follows:

- A. Chief Law Enforcement Officer means the chief of police, sheriff, state law enforcement director or a designee. Within this model policy, the chief law enforcement officer will be referred to as CLEO.
- B. Complainant means a person who submits a complaint to the CLEO alleging misconduct by an agency member.

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- C. Complaint means a written statement made to or by a CLEO alleging misconduct.
- D. Member means all voluntary and compensated personnel of the agency.
- E. Discipline means:
 - 1. oral reprimand,
 - 2. written reprimand,
 - 3. suspension,
 - 4. demotion, or
 - 5. discharge.
- F. Exonerated means a fair preponderance of the evidence established either that:
 - 1. the act or acts complained of did not occur;
 - 2. the agency member named in the complaint was not involved in the alleged misconduct; or
 - 3. the act(s) that provided the basis for the complaint occurred; however, the investigation reveals that such act(s) were justified, lawful or proper.
- G. Not Sustained means the investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegations made in the complaint.
- H. Sustained means a fair preponderance of the evidence obtained in the investigation established that the accused person's actions constituted misconduct.
- I. Formal Statement means the questioning of an agency member in the course of obtaining a recorded, stenographic or signed statement to be used as evidence in a disciplinary proceeding against the agency member.
- J. Respondent means any agency member, whether full-time, part-time, temporary or voluntary, against whom a complaint has been filed.
- K. Misconduct means:
 - 1. a violation of any agency policy and procedure governing conduct of agency members;
 - 2. the use of unnecessary or excessive force;
 - 3. the conviction of any criminal offense;
 - 4. abuse of authority;
 - 5. conduct which violates a person's civil rights;
 - 6. abusive or insulting language or conduct which is derogatory of a person's race, religion, sex, national origin or sexual preference;
 - 7. sexual harassment as that term is defined under Minnesota law;

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- 8. intimidation or retribution toward a complainant or witness involved in any complaint proceeding.

- L. Policies and Procedures mean the administrative rules adopted by the agency regulating the conduct of agency members.
- M. Shall / Will means, as used herein, that the action is mandatory.

- N. May means that the action is permissible.

- O. Receiving authority means the person who receives the complaint when the subject of the complaint is a CLEO.

PROCEDURE

A. INITIATING COMPLAINT

- 1. Anyone who has personal knowledge of facts or reliable hearsay information may file a complaint. Any agency member who has personal knowledge of misconduct shall file a complaint according to the procedures stated herein.

- 2. Any agency member shall self-report to the CLEO and to the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board any action, inaction, or condition of that agency member which the agency member reasonably believes would constitute grounds for disciplinary action under any of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board's regulatory provisions.

- 3. Upon receiving a complaint against a member within the agency, the CLEO receiving the complaint shall immediately have the complainant complete a Citizens Complaint Form (CCF) and assign an administrative case number. The complaint will not be considered filed until the complainant signs the CCF.

- 4. If the person making a complaint sets forth specific believable facts supporting an allegation of misconduct but wishes to remain anonymous, the CLEO receiving the complaint may, with sole discretion, permit the complainant to remain anonymous. In this instance the CLEO shall sign the complaint as the complainant. If the CLEO has reason to believe the complaint is unfounded, the CLEO shall have the authority to require an anonymous complainant to identify himself/herself. If that complainant

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refuses to do so, the CLEO may refuse to accept a complaint and shall advise the anonymous person of that fact.

5. After a CCF is filed, the CLEO shall sign the document keeping a copy for the agency and providing a copy to the complainant. The CLEO will forward a copy of the document to the respondent only after it is determined that the complaint does not allege a criminal violation and the notification will not impede a criminal investigation.
6. A complainant may be accompanied by an attorney or other representative at the time a complaint is filed or at any other stage of the process.
7. Any complaint made against a chief of police shall initially be made to the city administrator, manager or mayor. Any complaint made against a sheriff shall initially be made to the county attorney or the board of county commissioners. Upon receiving a complaint, the receiving authority shall immediately have the complainant complete a
8. Citizens Complaint Form (CCF) and assign an administrative case number. The complaint will not be considered until the complainant signs the CCF.
9. The city administrator, manager, mayor, county attorney or board of county commissioners should refer investigations of alleged misconduct against a CLEO to an outside law enforcement agency or criminal justice agency.

B. THE INVESTIGATION OF A COMPLAINT

Upon receipt of the Citizen Complaint Form (CCF), the CLEO shall make an initial determination as to whether the facts alleged require a formal investigation. If the CLEO decides that an investigation is not required, the disposition of the investigation is not required. The disposition of the complaint shall be either "not sustained" or "exonerated". The complainant and the respondent will be notified of this decision and the basis for determination. If the complainant supplies additional information within thirty (30) days of that initial determination, the CLEO may reverse this decision and order a formal investigation.

If the CLEO determines a formal investigation is required an appropriate person will be assigned to investigate the complaint. When the CLEO believes an external investigation is appropriate and when the CLEO is the subject of the complaint, the investigation will be assigned to an external agency.

The CLEO may suspend a respondent with pay at any time during the investigation of a complaint.

As soon as possible after being assigned the investigation the investigator shall inform the complainant of his or her name, business phone number and the status of the complaint.

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The investigator shall thoroughly investigate all allegations contained in the complaint and any other potential misconduct discovered in the course of the investigation. If the investigation reveals potential misconduct by another agency member the investigator shall report that fact to the CLEO or, in the case of a complaint against a CLEO, the appropriate city administrator, manager, mayor, county attorney or the board of county commissioners.

All agency members shall cooperate with the investigation. When the respondent is a licensed peace officer the investigation shall comply with the requirements of MN STAT 626.89 and acts amendatory thereto.

The investigator shall prepare a report which will contain all relevant information organized into the following three (3) sections.

- A. Allegations: an itemized summary of the acts of misconduct alleged in the complaint. Reference shall be made to those rules, procedures, orders, statutes, or constitutional provisions that would be violated if the allegations are taken as true.
 - B. Investigation: a chronological summary of the investigation including all pertinent facts obtained through interviews with the complainant, accused agency member and all available witnesses. Written statements, descriptions and analysis of any physical evidence, and all other relevant information shall be included.
 - C. Conclusions: the investigator's findings, conclusions as to whether any misconduct occurred and the underlying reasons for the finds and conclusions.
8. The investigation shall be completed within thirty (30) days of the filing of the complaint unless the CLEO determines there is good cause to grant an extension to the investigation time. The complainant and respondent shall be informed of any extension.
 9. A complaint received through the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training will be handled pursuant to this policy; the Board will be advised of the status of the complaint within 30 days.

C. ADDITIONAL INVESTIGATION, REVIEW AND DISPOSITION

1. Upon completion of the investigation the investigator shall submit the report, case file and all investigative notes to the CLEO. The CLEO may require additional investigation or make one of the following decisions: "exonerated," "not sustained," or "sustained."
2. The CLEO may postpone making a decision until any related criminal charges are resolved. The complainant and respondent shall be informed of this decision.

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3. If the decision is “exonerated” or “not sustained” the CLEO shall immediately notify the complainant and the respondent of the decision.
4. If the complaint is “sustained” the CLEO will:
 - a. issue findings of fact including a summary of the acts constituting misconduct and the specific statutes, policies, regulations and procedures violated; and
 - b. take appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action.
5. Prior to the implementation of remedial and/or disciplinary action the respondent will be provided with a copy of the findings of fact. The CLEO and/or appropriate person shall review the findings of fact with the respondent and explain the reasons for the remedial and/or disciplinary action.
6. The investigation may be re-opened by the CLEO at any time if substantial new evidence is discovered concerning the complaint.
7. When a “sustained” disposition is final the respondent may appeal the disposition pursuant to the rules and law governing the accused member's employment.

MAINTENANCE AND DISCLOSURE OF DATA

1. Disclosure to the public, complainant and respondent of data collected, created or received by the agency in connection with this policy and procedure shall be governed by the provisions of the MN Government Data Practices Act. Retention of data collected or maintained in connection with this policy shall be retained in accordance with the agency’s “Record Retention Schedule.”
2. All data collected, created or received by the agency in connection with this policy and procedure shall be maintained in accordance with the agency’s “Record Retention Schedule.”
3. The placement of the disposition report or other data in an employee’s personnel file shall be governed by the agency’s personnel policy.
4. Access to data collected, created, or received in connection with this policy and procedure may only be authorized by the CLEO or the agency’s Data Practices “Responsible Authority,” and as provided by Chapter 13, the “Minnesota Government Data Practices Act,” or valid court order.

CHAPTER 334

S.F. No.351

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An act relating to peace officers; guaranteeing peace officers certain rights when a formal statement is taken for disciplinary purposes; proposing coding for new law In Minnesota Statutes, chapter 626.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. [626.89] PEACE OFFICER DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES ACT.

Subdivision 1. DEFINITIONS. For purposes of this section the terms defined in this subdivision have the meanings given them.

(a) "Administrative hearing" means a nonjudicial hearing or arbitration authorized to recommend, approve, or order discipline.

Additions are indicated by underline; deletions by strikeout

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(b) "Formal statement" means the questioning of an officer in the course of obtaining a recorded, stenographic, or signed statement to be used as evidence in a disciplinary proceeding against the officer.

(c) "Officer" means a licensed peace officer or part time peace officer. as defined in section 626.84, subdivision 1. paragraph (c) and (f), who is employed by a unit of government.

Subd. 2. APPLICABILITY. The procedures and provisions of this section apply to law enforcement agencies and government units. The procedures and provisions of this section do not apply to:

(1) investigations and proceedings of the Minneapolis civilian police review authority;

or

(2) investigations of criminal charges against an officer

Subd 3. GOVERNING FORMAL STATEMENT PROCEDURES. The formal statement of an officer must be taken in accordance with subdivision 4 to 10).

Subd. 4 PLACES OF FORMAL STATEMENT. The formal statement must be taken at a facility of the employing or investigating agency or at a place agreed to by the investigating individual and the investigating officer.

Subd. 5. COMPLAINT. An officer's formal statement may not be taken unless there is filed with the employing or investigating agency a written complaint signed by the complainant stating the complainant's knowledge, and the officer has been given a summary of the allegations. Complaints stating the signer's knowledge also may be filed by members of the law enforcement agency. Before an administrative hearing is begun, the officer must be given a copy of the signed

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complaint.

Subd. 6. WITNESSES; INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS. Upon request, the investigating agency or the officer shall provide the other party with a list of witnesses that the agency or officer expects to testify at the administrative hearing and the substance of the testimony. A party is entitled to copies of any witness statements in the possession of the other party and an officer is entitled to a copy of the investigating agency's investigative reports, provided that any references in a witness statement or investigative report that would reveal the identity of confidential informants need not be disclosed except upon order of the person presiding over the administrative hearing for good cause shown.

Subd. 7. SESSIONS. Sessions at which a formal statement is taken must be of reasonable duration and must give the officer reasonable periods for rest and personal necessities. When practicable, sessions must be held during the officer's regularly scheduled work shift. If the session is not held during the officer's regularly scheduled work shift, the officer must be paid by the employing agency at the officer's current compensation rate for time spent attending the session.

Subd. 8. RECORD. A complete record of sessions at which a formal statement is taken must be made by electronic recording or otherwise. Upon written request of the officer whose statement is being taken, a complete copy or transcript must be made available to the officer without charge or undue delay. The session may be tape recorded by the investigating officer and by the officer under investigation.

Subd. 9. PRESENCE OF ATTORNEY OR UNION REPRESENTATIVE. The officer whose formal statement is taken has the right to have an attorney or union representative of the officer's choosing present during the session. The officer may request the presence of an attorney or union representative at any time before or during the session. When a request under this subdivision is made, no formal statement may be taken until a reasonable opportunity is provided for the officer to obtain the presence of the attorney or union representative.

Subd. 10. ADMISSIONS. Before an officer's formal statement is taken, the officer shall be advised in writing or on the record that admissions made in the course of the formal statement may be used as evidence of misconduct or as a basis for discipline.

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Subd. 11. DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL RECORDS. No employer may require an officer to produce or disclose the officer's personal financial records except pursuant to a valid search warrant or subpoena.

Subd. 12. RELEASE OF PHOTOGRAPHS. No law enforcement agency or governmental unit may publicly release photographs of an officer without the written permission of the officer, except that the agency or unit may display a photograph of an officer to a prospective witness as a part of an agency or unit investigation and the agency or unit may provide a photograph of an officer to the civilian police review authority for it to display to a prospective witness as part of the authority's investigation.

Subd. 13. DISCIPLINARY LETTER. No disciplinary letter or reprimand may be included in an officer's personnel record unless the officer has been given a copy of the letter or reprimand.

Subd. 14. RETALIATORY ACTION PROHIBITED. No officer may be discharged, disciplined, or threatened with discharge or discipline as a retaliation for or solely by reason of the officer's exercise of the rights provided by this section.

Subd. 15. RIGHTS NOT REDUCED. The rights of the officers provided by this section are in addition to and do not diminish the rights and privileges of officers that are provided under an applicable collective bargaining agreement or any other applicable law.

Subd. 16. ACTION FOR DAMAGES. Notwithstanding section 3.736 or 466.03, a political subdivision or state agency that violates this section is liable to the officer for actual damage resulting from the violation, plus costs and reasonable attorney fees. The political subdivision or the state is deemed to have waived any immunity to a cause of action brought under this subdivision, except that the monetary limits on liability under section 3.736, subdivision 4, or 466.04 apply.