

# **East Providence Police Department Office of Professional Standards Complaint Procedures**

...Provide a safe and orderly environment in our City through professionalism, dedication, an active partnership with the community, and concern for individual dignity...

“Protecting the partnership”

The task of policing today’s society is demanding and challenging. The East Providence Police Department will continue to demand the highest standards from its employees. Realizing that it is not possible to enforce the rules of society without incurring some animosity, we will endeavor to protect our employees from unwarranted and false complaints. Through this entire process, we will work to maintain your trust and support and develop a real working partnership with our community.

This has been prepared to acquaint you with the operation of the East Providence Police Department’s Office of Professional Standards and the complaint process.

The mission of the division is really quite simple: to protect the public trust

The men and women of the department understand that our greatest resource and asset is the support and assistance given by the community we serve. Naturally, this relationship, or “partnership” as we think of it, with the citizens of East Providence is something we must constantly strive to protect. This is a responsibility shared by every member of the department and it is the primary task of the Office of Professional Standards.

## **WHAT DOES THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DO?**

The Office of Professional Standards has the responsibility of investigating:

- Allegations of unnecessary force used by a member of the department in the performance of duty.
- Any allegation of criminal conduct by a member of the department.
- Allegations of false arrest

## **DOES THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DO ANYTHING ELSE?**

- The Office coordinates the receiving, processing, and conducting of internal investigations arising from citizen and internal complaints.
- The Officer reviews all use of force by department members and makes recommendations to the Chief of Police when necessary.
- The Office responds to the scene when there is a discharge of firearm by-on-duty personnel and conducts a separate investigation to determine if this action falls within departmental guidelines.

- The Office of Professional Standards review and coordinates all proposed disciplinary action against employees.
- The Office of Professional Standards maintains a Comprehensive central index of all complaints received within the unit as well as those received by line supervisors.
- The Office of Professional Standards maintains a statistical analysis of complaints to identify trends and patterns within the department or individual officers and makes recommendations to correct these problems.

## **TO WHOM DOES THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS REPORT?**

The Office of Professional Standards reports directly to the Chief of Police.

## **WHAT ABOUT OTHER COMPLAINTS SUCH AS DISCOURTESY OR POOR SERVICE?**

If you are unhappy with any aspect of police conduct you can make a complaint. These complaints will be investigated by the Office of Professional Standards or the employee's immediate supervisor will take the initial complaint and forward it to the Office of Professional Standards for investigation and filing.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I MAKE A COMPLAINT?**

If the complaint is or unnecessary or excessive use of force, false arrest, or violation of a specific criminal statute, the Office of Professional Standards will investigate the complaint, and based on the results, make a recommendation to the Chief of Police that the complaint be either sustained or not sustained. All decisions involving disciplinary action will be made in conjunction with the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights.

## **IS THERE SOMETHING DONE ON ALL COMPLAINTS?**

Yes, all complaints are thoroughly examined and investigations are either documented on a complaint form or become formal inquiries through the Office of Professional Standards consistent with the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights.

## **HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT?**

Complaints will be accepted from any source and may be made anonymously, in person, or by telephone, but preferably they should be made in person by the individual directly concerned in the allegation against the police employee. Any supervisor may take a complaint, and upon receiving the complaint will forward it to the Office of Professional Standards. A complaint may also be received by the Office of Professional Standards who will investigate it. As part of the investigation, you may be asked to give a sworn

statement to an Investigator from the Office of Professional Standards. An appointment will be made at a time convenient to you and you may bring with you anyone of your choosing. You will be treated courteously and need not fear any type of intimidation or other improper behavior, when making a complaint, simply relate the facts as you know them; don't attempt to add to or embellish your complaint, and be mindful that you will be asked specific questions regarding factual information. It is important that you make your complaint as soon as possible.

### **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED?**

After your complaint has been investigated you will be notified of the results by the investigating officer. If you are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, or the specific finding, you may ask that another agency review the investigation. Depending on the type of allegation, you will be informed by the Office of Professional Standards of the most appropriate agency for you to contact. You should also know that making a complaint in no way limits your ability or right to pursue any other complaint forums if you feel you have been wronged. Every complaint that involves a possible violation of a law is automatically forwarded to the Attorney General's Department for review.

### **WHAT RIGHTS DO POLICE OFFICERS HAVE WHEN A COMPLAINT IS MADE AGAINST THEM?**

Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights and their labor Officers are protected under the agreement which provides that they shall not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, and threats from supervisors, or unreasonable periods of interrogation. They have a right to counsel or union representation during the Investigation.

### **IS THERE ANY RISK TO ME WHEN I MAKE A COMPLAINT AGAINST A POLICE EMPLOYEE?**

No, only if you deliberately make a false complaint against an officer, and in the case, you may be prosecuted criminally and/or held civilly liable.

### **WILL THE POLICE REALLY BE IMPARTIAL WHEN THEY INVESTIGATE THEIR OWN OFFICERS OR EMPLOYEES?**

Yes, the question goes right to the heart of what professional policing is all about. We strive to ensure quality performance from all our officers who represent our police department and the City, and want the public to know that we will not tolerate misconduct. We are acutely aware that any tolerance or perceived tolerance of officer misconduct will lead to a breakdown of the public trust which would adversely affect the ability of the police department to function effectively.

## **DOES EAST PROVIDENCE GET MANY COMPLAINTS ABOUT ITS POLICE OFFICERS?**

No, our police officers respond to about 58,000 calls for service each year. Less than one-tenth of one percent results in complaints regarding the employee's conduct or performance.

The East Providence Police Department is committed to providing the best possible system for the objective and thorough examination of all complaints, and has taken the extra steps necessary to assure the public of the integrity of our investigations and an open approach to the review of our system.

### **East Providence Police Department**

750 Waterman Avenue

East Providence, RI 02914

[Hubert Paquette, Chief of Police](#)

(401)435-7600

### **Office of Professional Standards**

Sweetland House

610 Waterman Avenue

East Providence, RI

(401)434-1944