

Dear Citizens,

The quality of the relationship between the community and the Sheriff's Office, determines the level of cooperation and support required for effective and equitable law enforcement.

Personnel commendations and complaints assist the Sheriff's Office in evaluating the quality of service provided to the citizens of Arapahoe County.

Historically, it has been found that the majority of complaints against law enforcement officers are due to a lack of information regarding their duties and how they are entitled to carry them out.

Additionally, many times as citizens, you recognize when an individual goes above and beyond the call of duty. These individuals also need to be properly recognized for their efforts.

This brochure is designed to clarify some of the rights that you as a citizen have if you want to commend or make a legitimate complaint against a Sheriff's Office employee.

Your Sheriff's Office acknowledges its responsibility by establishing a system of commendation, complaint and disciplinary procedures. These procedures will not only subject the employee to disciplinary action when improper conduct is evident, but will also protect the employee when they properly perform their duties.

Together, we can make a difference. I am committed to providing the highest quality of law enforcement service to the citizens of Arapahoe County.

Sincerely,

David C. Walcher  
Sheriff

## **COMPLAINT PROCESS**

### **WHO MAY REGISTER A COMPLAINT?**

A complaint may be made by any citizen, prisoner or Sheriff's Office member.

### **HOW DO I INITIATE A COMPLAINT AGAINST AN EMPLOYEE?**

Complaints can be made by telephone, letter or in person. Complaints can be filed 24 hours a day with the on-duty supervisor or during regular business hours with the Office of Professional Standards/Internal Affairs Unit. All complaints including anonymous complaints will be accepted.

### **IF I AM UNDER 18 YEARS OLD, DO I HAVE A RIGHT TO FILE A COMPLAINT?**

Yes. Just have a parent, legal guardian or responsible adult present with you.

### **MUST I GIVE MY NAME TO FILE A COMPLAINT?**

No. However, an anonymous complaint can be very difficult to investigate. During the course of the investigation, additional information may be required from you, to ensure a successful conclusion.

### **WILL THE EMPLOYEE KNOW THAT I HAVE MADE A COMPLAINT?**

Yes. The employee will be advised of the allegations made against him or her. If known, the identity of the complainant will also be made available to the employee.

### **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INVESTIGATING THE COMPLAINT?**

Depending upon the nature of the allegation, the complaint can either be investigated by a Sheriff's Office supervisor or directly by the Internal Affairs Unit.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE EMPLOYEE?**

If the investigation indicates misconduct, the employee will be disciplined according to the seriousness of the rules violation. Disciplinary actions can range from verbal counseling to suspension, or in extreme cases, termination. If the allegation is criminal in nature, the case will be presented for prosecution.

### **NEED I BE CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE RETALIATION FOR MAKING A COMPLAINT?**

#### **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**

It is essential that public confidence be maintained, which enhances the ability of the Sheriff's Office to investigate and properly handle complaints against its members.

### **HOW LONG WILL THE INVESTIGATION TAKE?**

Minor complaints are often handled immediately. As a general rule, the investigation of a serious charge should be concluded in 30 days, unless circumstances necessitate additional time.

### **WILL I BE NOTIFIED OF THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION?**

If you have identified yourself, you will be informed in writing when the investigation has been completed.

## **WHAT TYPE OF DISPOSITION CAN RESULT FROM THE INVESTIGATION?**

At the conclusion of the investigation, the case will be forwarded to the employee's Division Commander for disposition. Possible dispositions to your case may include:

1. UNFOUNDED – The allegation is false or not factual; no misconduct.
2. EXONERATED – The incident did occur, however, the employee acted lawfully and properly.
3. NOT SUSTAINED – The investigation produced insufficient information to either prove or disprove the allegations.
4. SUSTAINED – The allegation is substantiated.
5. RESOLVED – There are no administrative charges against the member, there is a negotiated disposition, and/or the findings of an inquiry or a formal investigation do not otherwise fall within any other disposition.

## **WHAT IF I FILE A FALSE COMPLAINT?**

If you believe the complaint to be valid and the employee is ultimately exonerated, the case will be over. However, if it is determined that the complaint was false and malicious, you may be subject to criminal charges and/or a civil suit by the agency employee.

## **IF I HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE FURTHER INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE, WHO DO I CONTACT?**

For additional information regarding the commendation or complaint process, you can contact the Office of Professional Standard/Internal Affairs Unit at 720-874-4014.

## **COMMENDATION PROCESS**

### **WHO MAY RECOMMEND A COMMENDATION?**

Just as in the complaint process, a commendation for a job well done can be made by any citizen, prisoner or Sheriff's Office Member.

### **HOW DO I INITIATE A COMMENDATION FOR AN EMPLOYEE?**

Commendations can be made by telephone, letter, or in person. Commendations can be filed 24 hours a day with an on-duty supervisor or during regular business hours with the Office of Professional Standards.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY COMMENDATION RECOMMENDATION?**

Your recommendation will be forwarded to the Sheriff's Office Awards Board. The Board will determine the type of award to be given based on the circumstances. Minor commendations may be handled directly by the supervisor either verbally or considered when completing the employee's performance evaluation.

### **WILL I BE NOTIFIED OF THE RESULTS OF MY COMMENDATION RECOMMENDATION?**

Yes. On minor commendations you will most likely be advised by the supervisor of the type of action that will be taken. On commendations of a greater nature, you will be notified in writing of the results of the recommendation and the ceremonies that may take place, so that you may attend if you so desire.

### **THINGS TO REMEMBER**

The quality of relations between citizens and their law enforcement agency depends not only on reporting misconduct, but also on acknowledging a job well done.

## **ARAPAHOE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

### **Personnel Commendation & Complaint Procedures**

**Office of Professional Standards  
13101 East Broncos Parkway  
Centennial, Colorado 80112**

**(720) 874-4014**