



Frequently Asked Questions about the Complaint Process

Q. Is the Office of Professional Standards part of the Sheriff's Office?

A. Yes, but it operates independently of all other bureaus of the Agency and reports directly to the Assistant Sheriff.

Q. Are all complaints accepted?

A. All complaints are subject to investigation except those regarding differences of opinion on the issuance of criminal charges, traffic citations, or parking citations.

Q. Will my complaint impact any charges placed against me by the police?

A. **No.** Criminal and traffic charges must be resolved by the courts.

Q. May I speak with a Command Officer regarding a situation or problem without filing a formal complaint?

A. Yes. You can request to meet or speak with an employee's commander and be heard regarding your concerns. Your opinion is important to us in ensuring a high degree of professionalism and integrity.

Q. How much time do I have to file a complaint?

A. Complaints should be filed as soon as practical. Delays in filing a complaint could seriously hamper an investigation, since as time passes, evidence may be lost; personal memory of the incident may diminish; and witnesses may be difficult to locate.

Q. How do complaints of brutality differ?

A. Under Maryland Law, brutality complaints must be signed and sworn to under penalty of perjury, and filed within 366 days of the incident.

Q. How long do investigations take?

A. Investigations of police officers are governed by State law and certain procedures must be followed. All investigations are completed as soon as possible.

Q. How will I be informed of the outcome of an investigation?

A. Findings are mailed to the complainant at the conclusion of the investigation. In some instances, commanders may contact a complainant personally in lieu of sending a letter.

Q. What happens if I make a false complaint?

A. Complainants will be held responsible, both criminally and civilly, for knowingly making false statements or complaint.