



As a citizen, you are encouraged to contact the Wildwood Police Department if you have a complaint about the actions of a police officer or non-sworn employee if you believe their conduct was inappropriate or that they have violated the law. The Office of the Chief of Police can answer questions about actions of officers, initiate a complaint against an officer, and conduct investigations of police conduct. Although we encourage citizens to report police misconduct, complaints must be made in good faith. False or highly exaggerated complaints serve no good purpose for either the citizens or the officer.

Complaints will be accepted in person, in writing or by telephone. You may call the police department, or ask to speak with any supervisor of the department to file your complaint. It will be easier for you to ask for the on-duty shift supervisor. You may choose to remain anonymous, but please realize the anonymity can sometimes make it difficult to conduct a truly thorough investigation. A Citizen Complaint Form (CCF) will be completed on all complaints, which initiates the investigative review process. The CCF is forwarded to the Office of the Chief of Police for review.

All Citizen Complaint Forms completed by department personnel will require proof of identification of the complainant unless the complaint can be verified without the identify of the complainant.

The specific type of investigation that will be conducted depends on the severity and nature of the allegation. The Office of the Chief of Police will handle complaints of a serious violation and an Investigative Inquiry will be conducted prior to any Internal Affairs investigation. Formal complaints, meaning those done by the Office of the Chief of Police as well as designated Personnel Complaints done by other supervisory personnel, will require the accused employee, all complainants and witnesses to be interviewed under oath.

Citizens are encouraged to report legitimate complaints. State law prohibits the intentional filing of false reports to law enforcement and also prohibits lying under oath (perjury), which could result in criminal prosecution. Many complaints allege relatively minor violations of departmental policies or procedures. Complaints of this sort are usually forwarded through the accused member's chain of command for a supervisory investigation.

Informal interviews are conducted when the investigation is assigned to the Office of the Chief of Police. Except for those cases where you specifically ask NOT to be contacted, the person designated to conduct the investigation will speak to you about your complaint. Regardless of how a complaint is investigated, or by whom, when punitive action against an employee is recommended as a result of an internal investigation, the Chief of Police must authorize it.

When a formal investigation is concluded you will be notified of the results in writing. All complaints are finalized with a disposition. Our Department's policy defines the dispositions, or conclusions, of internal investigations in one of the following ways:

- Unsubstantiated: There is insufficient evidence to confirm or refute the complaint
- Substantiated: The allegation is true. The action of the agency or the individual was inconsistent with agency policy
- Exonerated: The incident occurred, but there was no violation of law or policy
- Unfounded: The allegation is either demonstrably false or there is no credible evidence to support it.

Substantiated complaints will result in command-level recommendations for disciplinary action. The Chief of Police makes the final decision. The action taken can range from a non-punitive counseling session to termination. By law, internal investigations are confidential until they are completed. Upon conclusion, all complaints and their associated reports become a matter of public record. You may request a copy of the report by agreeing to pay the nominal copying fees.

Florida Statute 112.532 is commonly known as the Police Officer's Bill of Rights. This statute, and departmental rules and policies, define the manner by which an internal investigation will proceed. Officers will not be harassed, intimidated, or threatened by supervisors, nor will they be subjected to unreasonable periods of interrogation. Officers have the right to legal counsel or union representation during an investigation. **Officers also have the right to seek civil action in cases where accusations were deliberately false or vindictive.**

If you have any questions or concerns, or you want to make a complaint contact the Wildwood Police Department at (352) 330-1355.