



# A Citizens Guide to the Commendation & Complaint Process



## What Happens When I Complain About a Police Department Employee?

The **Lancaster Police Department** requires that all of its police officers and employees maintain the highest standard of conduct and service.

## Who Investigates the Complaint?

All complaints are investigated thoroughly by the Internal Affairs Department. If a complaint is found to be valid, the Chief of Police will take steps to insure that any deficiencies are corrected.

## How Do I File a Complaint?

You may call, write a letter, or come to the police department and talk to one of the police department supervisors. If, after discussing your complaint with a supervisor, you wish to have a formal investigation, you will need to complete and sign a formal complaint form. The Lancaster Police Internal Affairs Department can be contacted Monday through Friday from 8am to 7pm, *Lieutenant Derek Clark (972) 218-2733*, *Sergeant Michael Fine (972) 218-2725*.

## Can People Under 18 Years of Age File a Complaint?

Yes. However, we require that one of your parents or guardians accompany you.

## What Will Happen to the Officer or Employee?

It will depend on what the employee did or did not do. If the employee's actions were criminal, he or she could face the same consequences as any other citizen. If the actions were improper but not criminal, the Chief of Police may discipline the employee. The discipline can range from counseling, oral reprimand, written reprimand, suspension from duty or termination from employment. When administering discipline, the Chief of Police considers the severity of the complaint and the past performance of the employee.

## What Happens After the Complaint is Filed?

You will receive a letter, an e-mail, or a phone call from the **Investigator** assigned to your complaint as soon as possible, advising you of the disposition of your complaint.

## Are There Any Complaints That Will Not Be Investigated?

The Lancaster Police Department will not investigate the lawfulness of any arrest or citation. The guilt or innocence of any criminal charge or traffic citation is determined only in court. If your complaint alleges that you were not advised of your Miranda Rights, this issue is also advised in court. The Lancaster Police Department will not investigate any complaint received 45 days after the incident that gave rise to the complaint

## REMEMBER!

- ✔ You may complain about an employee in the following ways:
  - ★ Call
  - ★ Write
  - ★ Speak personally to a supervisor
- ✔ If you wish to have a formal investigation conducted, you must complete and sign a complaint form.
- ✔ If you are under the age of 18, you must have a parent or guardian with you.
- ✔ **False complaints against a Police Officer may be punishable both criminally and civilly.**

If a Peace Officer is falsely accused, the complainant may face civil, as well as criminal action.



*The members of the Lancaster Police Department adhere to a set of positive values and a Code of Ethics.*

