

## YOUR COMPLAINT IS IMPORTANT

The Virginia Department of State Police is committed to the prompt and fair resolution of complaints concerning the actions and performance of our personnel. As an organization, we strive to provide the highest level of law enforcement service to all citizens. Policing is a very difficult and complex job in today's society. We realize that mistakes can be made and the actions of our personnel may fall short of your expectations.

The employees of the Department are aware of the important responsibilities and duties they have as public servants. The Department operates under the constitutional guarantees afforded to everyone and under the laws that govern us. Therefore, the courteous receipt of complaints, thorough and impartial investigations, and just dispositions are important in maintaining the confidence of our citizens.

## UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

A complaint may be made in the following ways:

- ◆ Go to any department facility and ask to speak with a supervisor.
- ◆ Contact the Internal Affairs Section at (804) 674-2792 or via e-mail at [IAUnit@vsp.virginia.gov](mailto:IAUnit@vsp.virginia.gov).
- ◆ Write a letter to the Superintendent of State Police or the Director of the Professional Standards Unit at P. O. Box 27472, Richmond, VA 23261.
- ◆ Complete a Citizen Complaint Form (SP-163). This form is available at all State Police offices, at [www.vsp.virginia.gov](http://www.vsp.virginia.gov) on the Internet, or by mail.

Department personnel will meet with you at a location in which you feel comfortable, if necessary. The following information will assist in our investigation:

- ◆ Date, time, and location of the incident.
- ◆ Names of the employees involved.
- ◆ Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any witnesses.

## THE INTERVIEW

A supervisor or internal affairs investigator will discuss the complaint with you. Perhaps the problem is with another agency or it may be possible that the supervisor or investigator may be able to explain the employee's actions to your satisfaction. If, after this discussion, you are satisfied with the explanation and assistance provided, then no further action is taken. However, if the complaint remains unresolved, the supervisor or investigator will take your information and ensure that the complaint is considered by the appropriate personnel.

## AFTER THE COMPLAINT IS MADE

A record of your complaint will be forwarded to the Department's Professional Standards Unit for evaluation and assignment. Allegations of criminal wrongdoing are typically investigated by the Bureau of Criminal Investigation prior to the initiation of an administrative investigation.

You will be notified in writing that your complaint was received, and you may be asked to talk to the supervisor or investigator assigned to conduct the investigation.

## HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE?

Internal affairs investigations are completed within 30 days of assignment to an investigator, except when an extension is granted due to extenuating circumstances.

## AFTER THE INVESTIGATION

All completed investigations are forwarded to the employee's division commander or bureau director for disposition.

## DISPOSITION OF THE INVESTIGATION

Division commanders will use the following terminology when resolving complaints:

- ◆ **SUSTAINED** - The facts substantiate the specific allegation(s) made or other misconduct.
- ◆ **NOT SUSTAINED** - Insufficient facts exist to either prove or disprove the allegation(s) made.
- ◆ **UNFOUNDED** - The facts disprove the allegation(s).
- ◆ **UNFOUNDED INQUIRY** - The facts in an initial inquiry reveal the alleged actions of the employee are not in violation of the Standards of Conduct. Complainant recants the alleged improper action(s).

After final disposition is reached by management, appropriate action is taken. The disposition of the complaint is a confidential personnel matter and is not released to the complainant.

## DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If the investigation indicated the employee committed an offense necessitating disciplinary action, such action taken will be commensurate with the severity of the offense. Mitigating circumstances may also be considered. Disciplinary action may involve counseling, remedial training, suspension, transfer, demotion, or termination.



## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT

The Professional Standards Unit includes the Internal Affairs Section, which is responsible for conducting investigations of complaints of improper action or misconduct by employees, or recommending the assignment of these investigations to the appropriate division. The Internal Affairs Section also prepares an annual analysis of internal affairs cases. This analysis is provided to Department division and unit commanders and is available to the public, upon request.

## STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The Commonwealth of Virginia has a set of rules governing the performance and personal conduct and acceptable standards for work performance of employees. These Standards of Conduct and Performance are designed and used to correct behavior. Discipline, under the Standards of Conduct, will not be based on any employee's race, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, sex, disability, or age. These standards were developed to protect the rights of all employees and citizens.

**The Virginia  
Department of State Police  
is a nationally accredited  
law enforcement agency.**

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Virginia State Police, independent yet supportive of other law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, will provide high quality, statewide law enforcement services to the people of Virginia and our visitors; and will actively plan, train and promote emergency preparedness to protect the citizens of the commonwealth and its infrastructure.

## COMMITMENT

Anyone who files a complaint against an employee of the Department of State Police shall be treated with courtesy and respect.

## HONESTY

Department employees are expected to be truthful and sincere in all their interactions with the public, avoid the appearance of wrongdoing, and confront and challenge any unethical behavior.

## RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Department employees are expected to discharge their duties with care, compassion, and concern for the well-being of all those they serve, recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of all persons.

## FAIRNESS

Department employees are expected to make decisions in a fair, objective, and impartial manner.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Department employees are expected to take responsibility for their actions and protect the public trust by upholding the laws of the United States and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

# How the Complaint Process Works



## Department of State Police