

# Jefferson Police Complaint Process

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## YOUR COMPLAINT IS IMPORTANT

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The Jefferson Police Department is committed to receiving and accepting complaints about the actions and performance of all of our personnel. As an organization, we try very hard to provide the highest level of quality police service to all of our citizens. Policing is a very difficult and complex job in today's society and we realize that mistakes can be made and that the actions of our personnel may fall short of your expectations.

The members of the Jefferson Police Department are aware of the important responsibilities and duties they have as public servants. They must maintain trust and integrity in the community. The Jefferson Police Department operates under the constitutional guarantees afforded to everyone and under the laws that govern us. Therefore the courteous receipt of complaints, through and impartial investigation and just dispositions are important in maintaining the confidence of our citizens.

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## UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

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A complaint may be made with the Department in the following ways:

- Go to the Police Department building and request to speak with a supervisor
- Call the Professional Standards Division at 706-367-8878
- Write a letter to the Chief of Police at Police Headquarters, PO Box 851, Jefferson, GA

If you wish, you may bring a lawyer, family member or friend with you when the complaint is made. Filing a citizen complaint does not prevent you from filing a claim against the city or complaints with the government authorities.

Police Department personnel will meet with you at a location YOU feel comfortable with any where in the City of Jefferson. Information that you have that would assist in the inquiry would include:

- Date, Time, and Location of the Incident
- Names, Badge Numbers, or Car Numbers of the members' involved
- Names, Addresses, and phone numbers of any witnesses

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## THE INTERVIEW

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A Supervisor (police Sergeant or Lieutenant) will discuss the complaint with you. Perhaps the problem is with an agency rather than the Police, or it may be possible that the supervisor may be able to explain the officers' actions to your satisfaction. If, after this discussion, you are satisfied with the explanation and help given, then no complaint is med. However, if the complaint is not resolved, then the Supervisor will assist you in filling out the *Citizens Complaint Form*.

## AFTER THE COMPLAINT IS FILED

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It the complaint is of a very serious nature, you may be directed to the Police Department Headquarters to talk to a member of the Professional Standards Unit.

The *Citizen Complaint Form* will be forwarded to the Professional Standards Unit for review. The commanding officer of the Professional Standards Unit will decide whether the complaint should be investigated by the involved members' supervisor or by investigators assigned by the Chief of Police. In investigating the complaint, the complainant may be asked to be interviewed by Police Detectives and may be asked to take a polygraph. Failure to cooperate *may* invalidate your complaint and cause the investigation to come to a halt. *If* it is determined that a complaint is false in nature, the Police Department may file criminal charges against the false accuser.

## HOW LONG WILL THE PROCESS TAKE?

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The Department requires that investigations of complaints received be completed within 30 days from the time they are received. The Police Chief may extend that time due to circumstances that prevent the completion of the investigation, i.e.. location of witnesses, evidence, etc. You will be notified about progress and the disposition of the complaint..

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE INVESTIGATION?

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The commanding officer of the Professional Standards Unit will discuss each complaint with the Chief of Police and his staff upon completion of the investigation. *If* evidence supports the filing of Departmental charges (violation of Police rules of conduct) then the involved members will have a hearing. The Police Chief will decide on a finding of your complaint and you will be informed by letter of the result. *If* you want more information or explanation, please call (706) 367-8878.

## WHAT IF A MEMBER IS IN VIOLATION OF DEPARTMENT PROCEDURES?

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The investigating Police official will provide the Police Chief with a recommendation for discipline. In severe cases this may result in termination of employment, reduction in rank, or suspension without pay. Other less severe sanctions include re-training and counseling by supervisory and command staff. *The Chief of Police is the final Departmental authority on discipline.*

## YOUR RIGHTS AFTER AN INVESTIGATION

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You will be notified of the finding or disposition of your complaint. Please be sure to keep the Professional Standards Division aware of any change of address. *If* you are dissatisfied with the finding, you may make an appointment with the Supervisor of our Professional Standards Unit to discuss the case.

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DIVISION

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The Professional Standards Division is an arm of the Chief of Police and is charged with the responsibility to monitor and maintain member's compliance with Departmental rules. Complaints that are investigated by the Professional Standards commander are always discussed and reviewed with the Chief of Police and the appropriate officers' supervisor.

## POLICY

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Anyone who files a complaint against a member of the Jefferson Police Department shall be treated with courtesy and respect. **NO MEMBER OF THE DEPARTMENT SHALL FAIL TO PROVIDE OR CONTINUE TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AT ALL TIMES TO THAT PERSON.**

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**JEFFERSON POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**CITIZEN COMPLAINT FORM**

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**REF:** CITIZEN COMPLAINT OF JEFFERSON POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICER(S) \_\_\_\_\_

**FROM:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITIZEN'S COMPLETE ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**PHONE, PAGER OR CONTACT NUMBERS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**FILING DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

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1. Where did this happen? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. The NAME of the Officer who was involved in this incident:

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3. The BADGE NUMBER of the Officer who was involved in this incident, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

4. The NUMBER ON THE POLICE CAR that was involved in this incident, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Where there any other Citizens or Officers who witnessed this incident? YES / NO (circle one)  
**(If YES, Please list them below in the WITNESS section of this form.)**

6 Please list any and all WITNESSES to this incident below:

NAME	Address	Contact Number
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



