

*For Policy/Procedural findings:*

In complaints against Agency policy/procedures, the Sheriff may find that the policy or procedure is either: appropriate as written OR is in need of revision. Complaints sustained against policy/procedures will be sustained against the agency and not the employee(s) involved.

**Mission Statement**

Ensuring fair and equal administration of the law, safeguarding civil liberties and preserving public safety and doing so with professionalism and unity of purpose, while being good stewards of the public's trust.



[www.sheriff-okaloosa.org](http://www.sheriff-okaloosa.org)

**How to make a Citizen's Commendation or Complaint:**

A complaint or commendation can be made in person or sent to:

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office  
Office of Professional Standards  
Headquarters Building  
50 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Shalimar, Florida 32579

Or

email: [ops@sheriff-okaloosa.org](mailto:ops@sheriff-okaloosa.org)

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office website is also available for more information regarding the process at: [www.okaloosa-sheriff.org](http://www.okaloosa-sheriff.org) or by contacting the Sheriff's Office at (850) 651-7400 and requesting a supervisor. In order to properly investigate your complaint, it may be necessary for you to provide a sworn statement to the investigator; particularly if the nature or your complaint concerns a serious act of misconduct. The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office encourages citizens to file complaints regarding employee misconduct, but complaints must be made in good faith. Should the agency discover that a complaint was made under false pretenses, you may be subject to criminal prosecution.

**OKALOOSA COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S OFFICE**



**Commendations and  
Complaints Information**



**SHERIFF LARRY ASHLEY**

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing the highest quality law enforcement services to the community. We welcome your comments and commendations for personnel who perform their duties exceptionally well. We also encourage inquiries and complaints about questionable performance and/or actions of Sheriff's Office personnel. Your constructive comments will enable us to maintain our high level of service and foster a healthier relationship with our community. Participation in this program is essential for accomplishing this goal and ensuring the efficiency of your Sheriff's Office.

## **Commendations and Complaints**

### **Commending Exceptional Performance**

Recognition for the performance of exceptional service is a valuable component for the assessment of service provided to our citizens. Commendations, either verbal or written, are one of the best ways you can let us know that you appreciate the good work of our employees.

Commendations received by the Sheriff and his staff are reviewed and forwarded to the employee with a copy placed into their agency personnel file. Your submitted commendations may also be posted on our agency's website to be read by employees and other citizens. Although our employees don't expect to be commended for everything they do, recognition for exceptional service is always constructive and much appreciated.

### **Supervisor Inquiry and the Complaint Process**

#### **What is a Supervisor Inquiry?**

A Supervisor Inquiry is any contact with a citizen in reference to an issue of concern that does not require an immediate formal investigation. The Supervisor Inquiry process seeks to resolve the issue at an informal level, to the satisfaction of the citizen, by means of discussion, explanation or clarification of law or policy. Inquiries are generally managed by an on-duty supervisor. A Supervisor Inquiry that is not resolved can become a Citizen's Complaint.

### **Complaints:**

It is the policy of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office to thoroughly investigate all complaints made against the agency or its personnel in a complete, impartial and timely manner. Complaints which are not resolved at the Supervisor Inquiry level may require a formal administrative and/or criminal investigation because of the nature of the allegation. Complaints are generally reviewed and investigated by the assigned supervisor for the employee. The investigation will usually include a review of all applicable reports, policies and procedures, an examination of all evidence to include audio/video recordings, and interviews with the involved parties and witnesses.

#### **How long will it take?**

Once a complaint has been submitted, you will be notified that your complaint has been received and is being investigated. The notification will include the anticipated time line for the completion of the investigation, the name of the investigating supervisor, and the investigative case number.

While a complex investigation may take several weeks to complete, you will be notified of the conclusion of the investigation. All formal complaints are forwarded to and maintained by the Office of Professional Standards.

### **What will happen at the end of the investigation?**

The Office of Professional Standards will review every formal complaint to ensure accuracy and that it was properly investigated. If there is a finding that an employee violated law or policy, appropriate action will be taken. This review is to assure that the investigation was handled thoroughly and objectively. At the conclusion of the investigation, you will receive written notification of the findings and any subsequent action taken.

### **Findings**

*Conclusions of the investigative findings for complaints filed against agency personnel are identified as:*

**Sustained** - Sufficient evidence of facts exist which were credible and convincing that a violation of law or policy occurred.

**Not Sustained** - The investigation failed to prove or disprove the allegation due to insufficient evidence or facts.

**Unfounded** - The investigation shows that the alleged act did not occur.

**Exonerated** - The investigation shows that the alleged act did occur, but was justified, lawful and proper under the circumstances.

**No Finding** - Insufficient information available to conduct an investigation.