



WHAT IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT?

A relationship of trust and confidence between members of the Sheriff's Office and the community they serve is essential to effective law enforcement. Law Enforcement Officers must be free to exercise their best judgment, and to initiate law enforcement action in a reasonable, lawful and impartial manner, without fear of reprisal. So, too, enforcers of the law have a special obligation to respect the rights of all persons. The Monterey County Sheriff's Office acknowledges its responsibility to establish a system of complaint and disciplinary procedures which not only subject the officer to corrective action when he conducts himself improperly, but also will protect him from unwarranted criticism when he discharges his duties properly. It is the purpose of these procedures to provide a prompt, just, open and expeditious disposition of complaints regarding the conduct of members and employees of the Office.

To this end, Monterey County Sheriff's Office welcomes from citizens of the community constructive criticism of the Department and valid complaints against its members and procedures.

WILL SOMEONE LISTEN TO MY COMPLAINT?

Yes, they will. We want to find out if something went wrong so we can see that it does not happen again.

IS THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE OUT LOOKING FOR COMPLAINTS?

No, we are not. A complaint could mean that someone has not done a good enough job. However, we do want to know when our service needs to be improved or corrected.

DOES A COMPLAINT HAVE TO BE MADE IN PERSON?

No. We prefer to talk to a complainant in person, but we will accept a written complaint or a telephone call. Persons making complaints will be personally interviewed by an investigator during the investigation.

WILL THE SHERIFF BE AWARE OF A CITIZEN'S COMPLAINT?

Yes, he will. The Sheriff gets copies of all complaints against Deputy Sheriff's. Each of the deputies' superiors is also notified.

WHO CAN A PERSON GO TO, TO MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Any member of the Sheriff's Office can take a complaint. The information will be delivered to the Professional Standards section where an investigation will be initiated.

WHO INVESTIGATES A CITIZEN'S COMPLAINT?

An investigator from the Professional Standards section or a supervisor designated by the Sheriff.

CAN A PERSON UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Yes. Bring one parent, a guardian, or a responsible adult with you.

ARE COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATED THOROUGHLY?

Very thoroughly. We want to find out where we went wrong. By the same token, if a person makes a false complaint, we want to find out and take appropriate legal action.

CAN SOMEONE GET INTO TROUBLE FOR COMPLAINING?

Not if they have been truthful. We would not and could not bring charges against a person who has acted in good faith.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE OFFICER?

That depends on what he did. If his actions were improper, he will be disciplined by the Sheriff. If his actions were criminal, he will be dealt with like any other citizen.

WILL THE PERSON COMPLAINING BE TOLD HOW THE COMPLAINT CAME OUT?

Yes. Each complainant will receive a letter from the Sheriff's Office telling them the disposition of the investigation.

WHAT ABOUT THE POLYGRAPH?

In certain cases, where we cannot find the truth any other way, the complainant may be asked to take a polygraph examination. The same is true for our deputies.

Our goal at the Monterey County Sheriff's Office is that you will never need to use the information contained in this folder.



MONTEREY COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
SHERIFF'S OFFICE
 Proudly protecting the community since 1850.

**CITIZEN'S COMPLAINT
 FORM**

1414 Natividad Road, Salinas CA 93906 ■ (831) 755-3700 ■ www.montereysheriff.org

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION					
NAME (LAST, FIRST, M.I.)					AGE
STREET ADDRESS			CITY	ZIP	
HOME PHONE	BUSINESS PHONE	DATE OF INCIDENT		TIME OF INCIDENT	
LOCATION OF INCIDENT			CITY	ZIP	
COMPLAINT IS AGAINST OFFICER(S)				CAR NUMBER(S)	

NATURE OF COMPLAINT (ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY)

The above information is true and correct and it is my desire that this complaint be investigated. I understand that to knowingly allege false and incorrect information may subject me to civil action, in the form of a lawsuit under Civil Code Section 47.5.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE A COMPLAINT AGAINST A POLICE OFFICER FOR ANY IMPROPER POLICE CONDUCT. CALIFORNIA LAW REQUIRES THAT THIS AGENCY MAY FIND AFTER INVESTIGATION THAT THERE IS NOT ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO WARRANT ACTION ON YOUR COMPLAINT; EVEN IF THAT IS THE CASE, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE THE COMPLAINT AND HAVE IT INVESTIGATED IF YOU BELIEVE AN OFFICER BEHAVED IMPROPERLY. CITIZEN COMPLAINTS AND ANY REPORTS OR FINDINGS RELATING TO COMPLAINTS MUST BE RETAINED BY THIS AGENCY AT LEAST FIVE YEARS.

I have read and understood the above statement.

 Signature Date

MAIL THIS FORM TO: **ATTN: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DIVISION**
 Monterey County Sheriff's Office
 1414 Natividad Road
 Salinas CA 93906