

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Grover Beach Police Department takes pride in providing professional service to our community. We recognize our responsibility to provide a process of receiving and investigating complaints concerning members of this Department.

It is essential that a relationship of trust exist between a police department and the community it serves. A part of maintaining that trust is the ability to successfully resolve issues in which citizens feel that they have been wronged. For this reason, we encourage citizens to come forward with concerns or complaints about our organization or the conduct of our employees.

A citizen complaint may be real or perceived, but the effect is the same if it is not properly addressed. There are a variety of causes for complaints. In some cases, there has simply been a misunderstanding or a lack of knowledge on the part of the citizen. A deficiency in training may also be a cause of the problem. It may also be found that there was improper conduct by an employee. In any event, we are committed to objectively investigating all complaints to determine the facts and make an appropriate and fair disposition.

Our goal is that you will never need to use the information contained in this folder. However, we don't want to fail in our continuing efforts to give YOU the best possible police service.

Jim Copsey  
Chief of Police

## **WHY DO COMPLAINTS OCCUR?**

As with all people-oriented businesses, misunderstandings do arise as to the procedures or lawful role of the police officer in the handling of various situations.

## **WILL YOU LISTEN TO MY COMPLAINT?**

Absolutely. We want to find out what, if anything, went wrong so that we can see to it that it doesn't happen again.

## **WHO WILL INVESTIGATE MY COMPLAINT?**

Either the officer's supervisor or an investigator assigned by the Chief of Police if the situation warrants.

## **WHO SHOULD I GO TO FIRST?**

You should take a complaint about a situation or an officer to their supervisor. If he isn't there, ask for the on-duty watch commander. Complaint forms may also be obtained from our staff to be filled out at a later time.

## **DO I HAVE TO COMPLAIN IN PERSON?**

We prefer to talk to you in person so that we can give you the best service we can, but we will accept a complaint by telephone or letter if necessary. It won't make any difference in the attention we give it.

## **I'M UNDER 18. DO I HAVE THE RIGHT TO COMPLAIN?**

Yes. Just bring one of your parents, a guardian, or a responsible adult in with you.

## **WILL I HAVE TO WRITE MY COMPLAINT OUT?**

We have found it's much easier to investigate a written complaint so we prefer them that way. If there are valid reasons why this can't be done, we can make other arrangements.

## **HOW CLOSELY WILL YOU INVESTIGATE?**

Very closely! We want to find out where we went wrong or what we can do better. By the same token, if a person makes a FALSE COMPLAINT, we want to find that out and take appropriate legal action.

## **DOES THAT MEAN I COULD GET IN TROUBLE FOR THE COMPLAINT?**

Not if what you're telling us is the truth. We're only interested in prosecuting those who make malicious, false allegations about people. We wouldn't (and couldn't) bring charges against a person who has acted in good faith.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE OFFICER?**

That will depend on what he or she did. If the officer's actions were criminal, the officer would be dealt with like any other citizen. If they were improper but not criminal, disciplinary action could be taken by the Chief of Police.

## **WILL I BE TOLD HOW THE COMPLAINT CAME OUT?**

Yes. You will receive a letter telling you the disposition of our investigation.

## **WHAT ABOUT THE LIE DETECTOR?**

In certain cases, where we can't find the truth any other way, you may be asked to take a polygraph examination.

## **WHAT IF I'M NOT SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION?**

We sincerely hope that would never happen. If it did, you could go to the City Manager, or in some cases, the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney or the Grand Jury.

# *What About My Complaint?*

