

## WHO MAY REGISTER A COMPLAINT

Any person may allege employee misconduct against any employee of the Grand Rapids Police Department. Anyone alleging misconduct is encouraged to appear in person, however, allegations of employee misconduct may be received by:

- Any GRPD supervisor or personnel assigned to the Internal Affairs Unit
- Telephone/Fax
- Internet
- Through the Mail (Address on the front of this brochure)
- Through a Third Party
- Office of Oversight and Public Accountability
- The City Attorney
- Labor Relations Director

The Internal Affairs Unit is located at 1 Monroe Center NW, telephone (616) 456-3480 / fax (616) 456-3282. The office hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. All allegations of misconduct against the Grand Rapids Police Department or its employees shall receive an appropriate, thorough, and objective review.

## COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Many allegations of misconduct can be satisfactorily resolved by a visit or a telephone call to the Grand Rapids Police Department, however, the Internal Affairs Unit will complete an appropriate and thorough investigation for qualifying complaints that cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

All qualifying complaints receive an appropriate, thorough, and objective investigation, which may include interview(s) with the complainant, the named employee(s), and known witnesses.

Allegations of minor rule or policy violations may be assigned to the employee's supervisor for investigation and disposition. At the conclusion of the investigation, the employee's supervisor will contact the complainant by telephone or in person to advise them of the disposition of their complaint, if requested.

Allegations of major rule or policy violations will result in the preparation of a **Complaint Intake Report**, which contains a summary of the allegations that have been received for investigation.

After a qualifying complaint is fully and properly investigated, the Internal Affairs Unit will render a disposition based on the established facts and circumstances. This disposition, along with its supporting information, will be included in a **Complaint Disposition Report** for qualifying complaints. Once completed, the Complaint Disposition Report is delivered to the Office of the Chief of Police for final action. The Internal Affairs Unit will provide written notice to both the complainant and the employee of the final disposition of an Internal Affairs Unit investigation and provide each with an opportunity to discuss the disposition as outlined in policy.

For those complaints that fall within the scope of the Grand Rapids Police Civilian Appeal Board, instructions for filing an appeal of the Internal Affairs Unit findings will be included with the Complaint Disposition Report mailing. This policy is detailed on the reverse side of this page. Additional information regarding the role and authority of the Civilian Appeal Board may be obtained by contacting the City of Grand Rapids, Attn: City Attorney's Office, 300 Monroe Ave N.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

## INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT

It is the policy of the Grand Rapids Police Department to investigate and resolve allegations of employee misconduct. The goal of the Internal Affairs Unit is to maintain the integrity of the Grand Rapids Police Department through the operation of a competent, objective, fair, and impartial internal investigation and review system.

Police Officers must be free to exercise their best judgment and to initiate action in a reasonable, lawful, impartial manner, without the fear of reprisal. At the same time, the rights of all individuals must be observed. This system of complaint and disciplinary procedures not only subjects Department employees to corrective action when they conduct themselves improperly, but also protects them from unwarranted criticism when they discharge their duties in a proper manner.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Complainants who have current criminal or traffic charges pending in an incident should be aware that the internal investigation process deals solely with matters of Department policy and the conduct of its employees. Regardless of the outcome of the internal investigation, existing criminal or traffic charges must still be processed through the court system.**

The Internal Affairs Unit is sensitive to the anxiety some complainants may feel with making a complaint against a Department employee. To that end, special arrangements

may be considered by investigators in establishing alternate locations for complainant interviews.

If you are an undocumented resident, we will not report you to the Office of U.S. Citizenship and Naturalization Services (formerly the Dept. of Immigration and Naturalization Services/INS), unless you have been convicted of certain felony criminal offenses. We want to hear from all community members.

## DISPOSITIONS

The dispositions of complaint investigations are classified as follows:

**UNFOUNDED:** The investigation conclusively proved that the act or acts complained of did not occur. (This finding also applies when the act(s) may have occurred, however, the named employee(s) were not involved.)

**EXONERATED:** The act, which provided the basis for the complaint or allegation, occurred; however, investigation revealed that it was justified, lawful and proper.

**NOT SUSTAINED:** Investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegation made in the complaint or to conclusively disprove such allegation.

**SUSTAINED:** The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegation made in the complaint. Violation of policy and/or procedure did occur, and appropriate administrative action will be taken.

There are five types of action, which can be recommended for a sustained case:

- 1) Training,
- 2) Counseling,
- 3) Written Reprimand,
- 4) Suspension without pay, or
- 5) Discharge from the Department.

Sworn police officers and civilian employees may appeal written reprimands, suspensions, and discharges from the Department.



## CITY COMMISSION POLICY 800-02

### SUBJECT: GRAND RAPIDS POLICE DEPARTMENT CIVILIAN APPEAL BOARD

**PURPOSE:** To encourage compliance with rules and regulations concerning the conduct of police officers during interactions with citizens; to encourage individuals who believe they have been mistreated by police officers to use the internal complaint process of the Grand Rapids Police Department to have that officer's conduct reviewed; to create a process that fairly and evenhandedly evaluates and judges the conduct of everyone involved to determine whether or not a breach of departmental rules and regulations has occurred; and to afford the community a sense of confidence that the community itself is involved as necessary in reviewing the activities of its police officers.

**POLICY:** A Civilian Appeal Board is hereby established within the Grand Rapids Police Department to act as a reviewing body for findings of fact made by the Grand Rapids Police Department with respect to complaints made by individuals who believe that they have been mistreated by police officers through:

- a) the use of excessive force;
- b) falsification/lying;
- c) civil rights violations; and
- d) hostility, discourtesy or other conduct unbecoming an officer when such conduct is committed in a context of racial animosity or prejudice.

For purposes of this policy, "racial animosity or prejudice" is evidenced by derogatory conduct or discriminatory behavior which involves expressions of prejudice through words, gestures, or actions directed at an individual based upon that person's race, color, religion, gender or national origin.

**(1) Membership, Term of Office and Vacancy.** The Civilian Appeal Board shall be comprised of nine (9) members. Each City Commissioner shall nominate one member, and the Mayor shall nominate three (3) members. The Mayor's nominations shall be made so as to encourage that the members selected for the Civilian Appeal Board constitute a diverse representation of the community at large. The Civilian Appeal Board shall be composed of those nominees approved by the City Commission.

Appointments to the Civilian Appeal Board shall be effective the first Monday in May for a term of two (2) years. No member shall serve on the Civilian Appeal Board more than three (3) consecutive full or partial terms or a total of six (6) years. Residency within the city is a continuing qualification for office for those members appointed. Members shall be deemed to have vacated and resigned their office if they cease to be a resident of the city during their appointed term. Mid-term vacancies will be filled as they occur by the appropriate appointing authority for the remainder of the term of the member leaving the Civilian Appeal Board. No individual may be appointed to a fill a vacancy unless they would be able to serve out the entire term.

**(2) Investigation of Complaints.** Individuals with complaints alleging that they have been mistreated by police officers through the use of excessive force; falsification/lying; civil rights violations; or through hostility, discourtesy or other conduct unbecoming an officer when such conduct is committed in a context of racial animosity or

prejudice, will be referred to the Internal Affairs Unit of the Grand Rapids Police Department. The Staff of the Internal Affairs Unit, with the assistance of an Assistant City Attorney, will conduct an investigation and prepare a proposed "Complaint Disposition Report" containing a summary of the facts regarding the complaint and a conclusion regarding whether the police officer(s) violated Grand Rapids Police Department Rules or Regulations. The Complaint Disposition Report, when approved by the Chief of Police, will be provided to the police officer(s) involved, the City Manager, the City Attorney, and the Labor Relations Division of the Human Resources Department. A copy of the Complaint Disposition Report will also be mailed to the complainant(s) at their last known address together with information advising the complainant regarding their right to appeal the conclusion reached in the Complaint Disposition Report to the Civilian Appeal Board.

**(3) Review by Civilian Appeal Board.** If the Complaint Disposition Report concludes that the complaint is not sustained, was unfounded or that the officer is exonerated, the complainant may appeal to the Civilian Appeal Board by filing a written request for review with the City Attorney's Office within fourteen (14) calendar days after the date of mailing of the Complaint Disposition Report. If a timely appeal is filed, the Civilian Appeal Board will review the conclusions contained in the Complaint Disposition Report and the evidence secured by the Grand Rapids Police Department during the investigation. The Civilian Appeal Board is not authorized to engage in separate investigations, to interview witnesses, or to hold evidentiary hearings, but it may remand the case to the Labor Relations Division to conduct supplementary interviews with the complainant, the officer(s), and witnesses in the event that it considers the record to be inadequate to complete its review. The Labor Relations Division will provide a written report to the Civilian Appeal Board summarizing the actions taken and information received during the supplemental investigation. The Civilian Appeal Board will meet as necessary to consider the matters referred to it in a timely fashion. Representatives of the Grand Rapids Police Department and the City Attorney's Office will be present during the review process to provide information regarding the scope of the investigation and to answer legal questions. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the Civilian Appeal Board will prepare a written decision affirming, reversing, or modifying the conclusions contained in the Complaint Disposition Report. If the Civilian Appeal Board reverses or modifies the conclusions in the Complaint Disposition Report, the written decision must contain sufficient detail to explain the reason for the reversal or modification. The Civilian Appeal Board has no jurisdiction to impose discipline or to recommend that discipline be imposed and its decision will not address or recommend potential disciplinary action. The decision of the Civilian Appeal Board will be submitted to the City Manager and a copy of the decision will be provided to the complainant(s), the police officer(s) involved, the City Attorney, the Police Chief, and the Labor Relations Division.

**(4) Final Disposition.** The Complaint Disposition Report as affirmed, modified or reversed by the decision of the Civilian Appeal Board will constitute the City's final disposition regarding the complaint. If the decision of the Civilian Appeal Board concludes that the police officer(s) violated Grand Rapids Police Department Rules or Regulations, the City Manager will determine the disciplinary or other action to be taken.

# Citizen Complaint Procedure



**INTERNAL AFFAIRS UNIT  
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