



**Division 01 Administration and Organization**

**Chapter 15 – Complaint Procedures**

January 2009

**POLICY**

This General Order shall establish the procedures for handling external complaints and concerns from the general public and the citizens we serve, as well as internal complaints from members and employees.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Complaint** – An expression of dissatisfaction from a civilian, general public, member, or employee, such as poor service, protocol violations, or conduct unbecoming of a representative of the Fire/EMS Department.

**PROCEDURES**

Complaints or concerns come to the Fire/Emergency Medical Services from a variety of sources, such as citizens, general public, employees, and members. Employees and members must go through their chain-of-command to voice their complaint or concern. All complaints must be given immediate attention and investigated thoroughly. If the matter is handled promptly and courteously, the person filing the complaint will appreciate the actions. Personnel's timely response will reflect a more positive image of the Fire/EMS Department.

Whenever a complaint is received in a firehouse, personnel should refer the citizen to the Emergency Operations Center at 301-583-2200. If this is not possible, Fire/EMS personnel should obtain minimal information such as the name and phone number of the caller, address of the incident, specific concerns, and name of individual or units involved, if available. Furthermore, personnel

shall advise the complainant that this information will be forwarded to the appropriate office.

Fire/EMS Operations Center personnel will complete a complaint form on the computer, then print and fax or email a copy to the appropriate battalion chief and the Emergency Operations Command office. If the incident involves a paramedic or paramedic unit, the complaint will be given to the on-duty Advanced Emergency Medical Services (AEMS) supervisor, and a copy faxed to the Emergency Operations Command office. The Battalion Chief or the On-duty AEMS Supervisor will attempt to make initial contact within one hour of receipt of the complaint. An immediate resolution shall be attempted whenever possible.

If the complaint is resolved, the complaint form with the resolution status section completed shall be sent to the Emergency Operations Command office for informational purposes. If immediate resolution is impossible following initial contact, the complainant shall be advised that a Departmental representative will be contacting them within 3 business days. At this point the complaint form will be forwarded to the Emergency Operations Command office immediately for assignment to the appropriate major or volunteer Division chief for investigation or resolution. Moreover, the AEMS Quality Assurance Officer will be notified when a complaint involves medical care or medical protocol issues.



The investigation and resolution shall take place within 14 calendar days of the receipt of the complaint or concern. If the concern is not resolved within that time frame, weekly updates must be given to the appropriate major or volunteer division chief. Upon completion, the completed package will be forwarded to the Emergency Operations Command office.

At no time may personnel obstruct or prevent officers from conducting an investigation to resolve a complaint. Investigations will be done in a timely manner and all personnel will be afforded their appropriate rights during an investigation.

The individual who completes the investigation may be directed to prepare a written response to the complainant depending on the nature of the complaint and/or resolution.

The Emergency Operations Command office, upon completion, will return all information concerning the status and/or resolution of complaints to the Fire/EMS Operations Center Coordinator. The Fire/EMS Operations Center Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining and closing out the complaints in the database.

#### REFERENCES

N/A

#### FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

N/A