



# Stephenville

## Police Department



### **How to File a Complaint or Commend an Employee of the Stephenville Police Department**

The Stephenville Police Department is vitally interested in taking action when its employees are guilty of wrongdoing. Your complaint will be given a fair and thorough investigation. By the same token, if you see a Stephenville Police Department employee who performs outstanding work, tell us about it. Following are procedures for filing a complaint or commending an employee.

#### **How to file a complaint**

Complaints against a Police Department employee can be directed to the Stephenville Police Department, Professional Standards Unit, 356 N. Belknap, Stephenville, TX 76401.

Texas law requires that all complaints against police officers be in writing and signed by the person making the complaint. Complaints must be made within 30 days of the incident unless special circumstances exist. The person who was wronged must file the complaint; other persons may give statements as witnesses. The informal complaint process is used for issues such as discourteousness. The formal complaint process is utilized to report any official misconduct, dereliction of duty, etc. The Professional Standards Unit will ensure that a thorough investigation of your complaint is conducted. Just as citizens who are arrested must be told the charges against them, a police employee must be given a copy of the complaint before any disciplinary action is taken. When the investigation is completed, you will be notified of the results and action taken.

#### **False complaints**

If a person knowingly and intentionally makes a false statement under oath, or swears to the truth of a false statement previously made under oath, that person may be found guilty and punished by a fine up to \$4,000, confinement in jail up to one year, or by both fine and imprisonment.

#### **What happens when a complaint is upheld?**

When the investigation finds that the charges against a police employee are true, the Police Chief notifies the employee and may take one of the following actions:

- Reprimand the employee verbally or in writing;
- Suspend the employee without pay;
- Demote the employee; or
- Discharge the employee.

Employees can appeal the department's decision to uphold a complaint and the decision to discipline the employee.



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### **What happens when a complaint is not upheld?**

Complaints must be supported by sufficient evidence. When the investigation cannot find the degree of evidence necessary to prove the employee acted improperly, the employee and the citizen are both notified in writing.

### **What if you are not satisfied with the outcome?**

You may appeal the findings of the Professional Standards Unit to the Police Chief at 356 N. Belknap, Stephenville, TX 76401 or the Office of the City Manager at 298 W. Washington, Stephenville, TX 76401.

### **Racial Profiling Complaints**

CCP Art. 2.132 Law Enforcement Policy on Racial Profiling requires the department to provide public education on the racial profiling complaint process. For the Stephenville Police Department, this process is the same as the department's complaint process, as described in this publication.

### **What is the difference between an informal and a formal complaint?**

Informal complaints are generally handled by the employee's supervisor and the punishment cannot exceed a reprimand. The types of incidents handled by informal complaints are typically less serious conduct allegations. A formal complaint is handled by the professional standards division of the police department and is appropriate for more serious conduct allegations. The Chief, at his/her discretion, may enhance an informal complaint to a formal one if the initial investigation shows that potentially more serious conduct may have occurred.

### **How do I commend a Police Department employee?**

1. Write a letter to the employee's supervisor or the Police Chief at 356 N. Belknap, Stephenville, TX 76401
2. Call the Police Department at 254-918-1273 and ask to speak with the employee's supervisor. If you are unsure of the employee's name, describe the employee and the specific actions or demeanor that impressed you. Mention the location, date and time the incident occurred.
3. Contact the Stephenville Police Professional Standards Unit by sending an email to: [ogaitan@stephenvilletx.gov](mailto:ogaitan@stephenvilletx.gov)



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## INFORMAL CITIZEN REQUEST FOR ACTION

**Please note: Vernon's Civil Statute 614.022 & 614.023 require all complaints against firefighters or police officers to be in writing in order to be considered by the Chief of the Fire or Police Departments. The complaint must be in writing and signed by the complainant. A copy must be submitted to the employee before disciplinary actions are taken.**

Date Complaint Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Complaint received By: \_\_\_\_\_

Response to Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Response Made By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation of Complaint: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation Made By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to be contacted? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_ Date Contacted \_\_\_\_\_



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## FORMAL CITIZEN REQUEST FOR ACTION

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I reside at \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and my telephone number is \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby voluntarily make the statement set out below. Acknowledging this, I hereby voluntarily make the following statement:

**DATE OF INCIDENT BEING REPORTED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT AND/OR ACTION REQUESTED:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Attach additional pages if needed.)

Signature of Complainant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, by the said \_\_\_\_\_, to certify which, witness my hand and seal of office, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF TEXAS  
NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: \_\_\_\_\_

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