

Citizen Guide to Making Commendations, Inquiries, and Complaints



MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Newport Police Department is to provide excellence in police service through aggressive pursuit of violators of the law and the prevention of crime and disorderliness. This is accomplished by forging a partnership with the citizenry of Newport to enhance the quality of life, reduce the fear of crime, preserve the peace, and impartially enforce the law, while maintaining a higher standard of integrity than is generally expected of others and respecting the dignity of each individual. Our services are rendered with courtesy, responsibility and in adherence to the provisions of the Constitution of the United States.

Gary T. Silva
Chief of Police

ABOUT THE NEWPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Newport Police Department has been providing police services to the community for more than 100 years. The Department ascribes to traditional values of honest, dedicated public service while pursuing the most efficient and effective means of satisfying the broad array of demands emanating from a modern and dynamic municipal environment. The Department takes pride in the leadership role it has demonstrated locally and on the national level. The Department has received national acclaim for its Community Oriented Policing pilot program. Through a series of lectures and seminars, Department representatives have been sharing the successes borne from this program with other police agencies throughout New England and on the East Coast.

The efficient delivery of total police services is accomplished through a balanced effort involving three distinct but coordinated Department divisions. The Patrol Division provides front line police services. The Division provides first-response to emergencies as well as engaging in preventive patrol activities. The Criminal Investigative Division provides follow-up investigative work on reports of criminal activity. The Division corroborates initial crime data and coordinates police investigative work for presentation in court. The Administrative Services Division provides an array of support services sustaining and complementing the front line and investigative follow-up functions.

As a means of maintaining high quality service and a healthy relationship with the community, the Newport Police Department encourages recommendations from the public on ways to improve our services, welcomes commendations of our personnel, and encourages inquiries and complaints about questionable performance, actions, policies, or procedures.

COMMENDING SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

The members of the Newport Police Department strive to provide the best police service available. Chief Gary T. Silva would like to be notified of exceptional service provided by any members of the Newport Police Department. The best way to commend the actions of a Newport Police Department employee is to write a letter describing the incident and the actions that you thought were exceptional. Information such as the date, time, and location will help to identify the employee if you do not know his or her name. If you choose not to write, you may ask to speak with the employee's supervisor and make a verbal commendation.

Commendations received by the Chief of Police are forwarded to the employee with a copy placed in his or her personnel file. Although our employees do not expect to be thanked for everything they do, recognition of exceptional service is always appreciated. Feedback like this lets us know if we are doing a good job.

The Newport Police Department is committed to providing the best service possible. Citizen comments are important in helping us achieve this goal. Any recommendations or suggestions on how to improve police service are welcome. Please direct all comments to:

Chief Gary T. Silva

Newport Police Department

120 Broadway

Newport, RI 02840

Office: 401-845-5776

E-mail: mmckenna@cityofnewport.com

MAKING AN INQUIRY OR COMPLAINT ABOUT A POLICE EMPLOYEE

An inquiry or complaint can be made by letter, email, via our web site, telephone, or in person. Citizens may be required to complete a citizen's complaint form. Forms can be obtained via our web site, www.cityofnewport.com, at Newport City Hall, or at the police station. At the request of citizens, these forms may be mailed or faxed to them.

If a citizen inquiry or complaint is about personnel, the Officer in Charge (OIC) must be contacted. If the inquiry or complaint cannot be handled at the shift level, the supervisor will forward the complaint to the proper authority.

If an inquiry or complaint is based on a misunderstanding or a lack of knowledge, the employee may be asked to offer an explanation. If the complainant is not satisfied with the explanation given, the inquiry or complaint will be forwarded to a proper authority for further review.

A citizen making a complaint or inquiry about a police employee should be prepared to provide the following details, if known: the date, time, and location of the event, the names or badge numbers of the Department personnel involved (or a description of them), and the name, address, and telephone numbers of any witnesses.

No citizen will be denied an opportunity to file a verbal or written complaint concerning a Department employee.

The Internal Affairs Lieutenant can be contacted at anytime during any investigation.

Lieutenant Jose Costa
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120 Broadway
Newport, RI 02840
Office: 401-845-5778
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INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

Once your inquiry or complaint is received, it will be thoroughly investigated by an officer designated by the Chief of Police. The investigation may include a review of all applicable reports, policies and procedures, examination of any evidence or medical records, and interviews with all parties and witnesses. A simple inquiry or complaint may take a few days to complete or may take a substantial period longer to investigate and review.

FINDINGS

At the conclusion of an internal investigation resulting from a citizen complaint, the complainant will receive written notification of the findings. There are five possible findings:

1. **Unfounded:** The investigation indicates that the incident did not involve Newport Police Department personnel.
2. **Exonerated:** Acts did occur, but were justified, lawful, and proper under the circumstances.
3. **Not Sustained:** The investigation fails to discover sufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegations made in the complaint.
4. **Sustained:** The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegation made in the complaint.
5. **Not Involved:** The investigation establishes that the individual subject of the complaint was not involved in the incident.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

The Newport Police Department recognizes that police officers and private citizens working together can solve community problems related to crime, the fear of crime, social disorder, and neighborhood decay. This belief requires that the Newport Police Department develop a relationship with the law abiding people of the community, allowing them a voice in setting police priorities and involving them in efforts to improve the overall quality of life in their neighborhoods. This philosophy is designed to shift the focus of traditional police efforts from random response of symptomatic issues, to one of solving identified problems, that are the root causes of crime and disorder.

If you have any questions or suggestions about an internal affairs investigation, or any specific action taken by a department employee, you can contact Chief Gary T. Silva at (401) 845-5776, or send your comments to:

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