

Campus Police: Compliments and Complaints

Michael A. Kessie, Chief of Police – 11/13/13

During the presentation and discussion of the White Paper supplied to Campus Police last month, the question of how to file a complaint against Campus Police Employees was discussed. All of the New College of Florida Police Department General Orders have been under review since February 2013. The complaint process, also known as the Internal Affairs Procedure, is one of the General Orders due to be reviewed. Until this can be accomplished, I felt it would be beneficial to give everyone information on the appropriate way to file a complaint or pass along a compliment towards a member of the Campus Police Department. I have placed a link to this document on our website at www.ncf.edu/police. I have also asked the Catalyst to publish this information or the link.

Please understand that the way Police Officers are hired, disciplined, terminated, and even promoted are, for the most part, done pursuant to Florida State Statute and our General Orders. We must also comply with the local bargaining unit's union contract, the Police Officer's Bill of Rights, and New College of Florida Rules and Regulations. PCO's, Police Communication Operators, and other Civilian Staff also have certain protections and rights based on some of the same documents.

There are normally two types of complaints:

- Supervisor Inquiry – These are complaints where a community member may say the officer was perceived as rude, a police report completed by an officer might be incorrect, or a traffic violator was given a ticket that the driver feels should not have been issued. These are the most prevalent complaints and most easily corrected. Most of the time a misunderstanding of police procedure or facts causes this type of complaint to be filed. Often times, additional training or coaching is used to correct these matters if necessary. When a complaint like this is received, the Chief of Police will review it and assign it to be investigated, in most cases, by the officer's direct supervisor. After it is investigated, the Chief receives the completed investigation with a recommendation how to resolve the matter. The community member is contacted and given the results of the inquiry and further options.
- Internal Affairs Investigation – These are more serious allegations that may lead to disciplinary action ranging from an Oral Warning to Termination. This investigation is normally assigned by the Chief of Police to an officer one rank above the officer being investigated. Examples of these violations may include moral or ethical issues or may be criminal in nature. When the investigation is complete, the Chief of Police decides what, if any, discipline is necessary. If the matter is serious enough, the Chief of Police may consult with other College Administrators or outside Law Enforcement Agencies.

If you have a concern, whether it is positive or negative, please contact Lt. Tully jtully@ncf.edu or me at mkessie@ncf.edu. You can also reach us at 941-487-4210. I hope this clears up any confusion about filing complaints or passing on compliments concerning police employees. We encourage the community to help us improve on our weaknesses and let us know about our strengths when we do something positive. There is also a Campus Police Service Survey on the Campus Police Website where you can give a quick comment about Police Services. Instructions are on the form.