

# SHELBYVILLE FIRE & RESCUE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

	<b>SECTION: General</b>	S.O.P: 103.10
	<b>SUBJECT: Citizen Complaints</b>	PAGE: 1 of 2
	<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b> December 1, 2012
		<b>Revision Date:</b>

## ***Purpose:***

All Shelbyville Fire Department members will respond to the public in a courteous, caring and appropriate manner. All citizen concerns and/or complaints regarding Fire Department members and/or services will be addressed in a prompt, courteous, and positive manner.

## ***I. General Information***

Citizen complaints and/or concerns range from individual performance or nonperformance to the overall level of service delivery provided. Management and supervisory personnel will attempt to service and resolve complaints at the lowest appropriate level in the Department. All complaints, including those from citizens wishing to remain anonymous, will be documented on a Complaint Record Form. The form will be filled out as completely as possible. The completed form will be forwarded to the Chief/Mayors office and will be handled accordingly.

## ***II. Complaints Received by Fire Administration***

Citizen complaints received in the Fire Department Administration Office will be directed to the Fire Chief. A Complaint Record Form will be initiated and the complaint Assigned to the appropriate Division/Section for investigation. ***All complaints alleging serious administrative or criminal misconduct will be assigned to the Chiefs Office.***

## ***III. Investigating Complaints***

Each complaint received by the Department will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. Regardless of severity, each complaint should be regarded as an opportunity to examine our customer service at the point of contact. Unless the complainant requests ***“no contact”*** the investigating officer should contact the complainant as soon as possible to inform the complainant that their concern is being addressed. Upon contact, the following steps should be performed:

1. Inform the complainant of your name and rank and how you relate to the area of concern.
2. Restate the complaint, as you understand it.
3. Ask if your understanding of the complaint is correct.
4. Reconcile any discrepancies.
5. Ask complainant if they would like you to contact them when investigation is complete.
6. **THANK THE COMPLAINANT FOR BRINGING THE CONCERNS TO YOUR ATTENTION.**
7. Interview the individual/crew that the complaint was lodged against, and document the results.
8. Investigations conducted by the second level of supervision or above, advise members of the right to Union representation.
9. Discuss the call/incident that generated the complaint.
10. Ask if anything unusual occurred.
11. Describe the incident as related by the complainant.
12. Discuss any discrepancies.

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### ***IV. Disposition***

After considering all available information, the investigating officer will make one of the following findings:

1. UNFOUNDED-The alleged act did not occur.
2. EXONERATED- The act occurred but was justified, lawful and proper.
3. NOT SUSTAINED- The investigation produced information insufficient to prove Or disapprove the allegation.
4. SUSTAINED-All or part of the act occurred as alleged. (A finding of "SUSTAINED" must be based on the existence of substantial fact in support of reasonable proof.)

### ***V. Documentation***

The investigator will provide written documentation of his actions, stating the facts that include the statement/s of the individual/crew. In some cases the investigator will need to obtain written statement/s from the individual/crew, which will be attached to the Complaint Record Form.

### ***VI. Follow-up***

After the investigator has determined the appropriate "finding," a meeting should be held with the crew/individual named in the complaint, along with the shift representative, if requested. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the finding and any pertinent information. If corrective action is required, it will be outlined at this time. Many complaints will fall in the "**NOT SUSTAINED**" and "**EXONERATED**" category. These incidents should be thoroughly examined from a customer service point of view. The focus of the discussion concerning these incidents should be on how future encounters of a similar nature might be handled to avoid creating unhappy customers.

If the complainant requested follow-up, the investigator should, thank them for sharing their concerns and advise them that the complaint was investigated and proper action was taken.