

## General Information

Although the employee(s) named in a complaint will, at some point, be required to respond to the specific allegation made, they are not permitted access to cases under investigation. Complainants need not be concerned that they will be subject to retribution for legitimately stating a complaint, as procedures are in place to prevent this.

Complainants who have current criminal or traffic charges pending in an incident should be aware that the internal review process deals solely with matters of departmental policy and the conduct of agency employees and officers. Regardless of the outcome of the internal investigation, existing criminal or traffic charges must be dealt with through the proper courts.

A complaint will not be accepted after thirty (30) days from the alleged incident, unless a waiver is granted by the Chief of Police.



METRO Police Department  
Professional Standards Section  
1900 Main Admin. Building  
13th Floor, Room 13040  
Houston, Texas 77208-1429

Metropolitan Transit Authority



# Citizen Complaint Procedures

*How citizens may file a formal complaint and how such complaints are handled.*

METRO Police Professional Standards  
Phone: (713) 615-6487

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## The Importance of Your Complaint

The METRO Police Department recognizes that its employees and officers are responsible to the public for their conduct and at certain times a conflict could arise between a citizen and an agency employee in the performance of their duty. The proper relationship between police and citizens is necessary to gain confidence and trust, which is essential to effective law enforcement.

Police officers must be free to exercise their best judgment and initiate action in a reasonable, lawful, impartial manner, without fear of reprisal. At the same time, they must observe the rights of all people. The complaint process and appropriate disciplinary procedures not only subjects agency members to corrective action when they conduct themselves improperly, but also protects them from unwarranted criticism when they discharge their duties properly.

A disagreement over the validity of a citation is not a complaint. Such disagreements should be directed to the proper court having jurisdiction in the matter.

The Department realizes that confusion, different perceptions, or the timeliness of information will sometimes result in different versions of the same incident being described. Beyond legitimate error, however, the deliberate making of a report which the complainant knows to be false or misleading could constitute a violation of State Law.

## Complaint Procedures

The complaint process is designed to deal with each case factually and fairly. Citizens who file complaints are treated respectfully and the accusations against an agency employee are taken seriously. All complaints are investigated thoroughly and all findings are based upon impartial evidence gained during the investigation.

However, many complaints can be satisfactorily explained by a visit or telephone call to the employee's supervisor, usually a Sergeant or Lieutenant. The supervisor will talk with you about your complaint and try to resolve it at this level.

Professional Standards personnel are available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to discuss your complaint about any member of the Department.

You may submit a complaint:

- In person at METRO Police Headquarters located at the METRO Administration Building adjacent to the Downtown Transit Center
- By phone at (713)615-6487
- By emailing [cleotilde.mcclelland@ridemetro.org](mailto:cleotilde.mcclelland@ridemetro.org)
- Mail a letter describing your complaint to:  
METRO Police Department  
Professional Standards Section  
1900 Main Street  
Houston, Texas 77002

## Dispositions

Any complaint can be made anonymously, without giving your name. However, you cannot be informed of the internal review's result if you choose to remain anonymous. After a thorough investigation, the complaint will be classified into one of the following dispositions:

**Exonerated:** Act was lawful and proper.

**Unfounded:** Incident did not occur or affected employee was not involved.

**Not Sustained:** Insufficient evidence was found to clearly prove or disprove the allegation.

**Sustained:** The allegation is supported by sufficient evidence. Violation of policy and procedure did occur, and the appropriate administrative action will be taken.

**Misconduct Not Based on Complaint-Sustained:** Substantiated misconduct not alleged in the complaint; but, disclosed in the investigation.

**Policy Failure:** The allegation is true and the action of the Department or the employee was consistent with Agency policy.

There are five types of disciplinary action which can be recommended for a sustained case:

1. Training
2. Counseling
3. Written reprimand
4. Suspension
5. Termination

The Chief of Police makes the final determination as to the disposition of the case.