

## *Who May Complain and How*

Any citizen who feels that they have knowledge of police corruption or misconduct is encouraged to use the Williston Police Department Complaint Procedures.

A complaint may be made by contacting the police department officer-in-charge either in person or by phone. The Officer-in-charge will document the complaint and determine the manner in which the complaint will be handled according to policy. Complaints may also be made directly to the Chief of Police during normal business hours.

## *Complaint Investigations*

The investigation process helps to protect the integrity of the Williston Police Department and its personnel, both sworn and non-sworn.

It is the goal of the Citizen Complaint procedure that the rights of all citizens and employees be protected. Police officers must be free to exercise their best judgment and initiate action in a reasonable, lawful, and impartial manner without fear of reprisal. A proper relationship between the police and the citizens of Williston must be fostered by trust and confidence which is essential to effective policing.

**This system of complaint and disciplinary procedures not only subjects officers to corrective action when behaving improperly, but also protects them from unwarranted criticism when discharging their duties properly**

## *What Should Be Reported*

Police behavior that can be subject to citizen complaints include:

**Corruption**, such as:

- Theft
- Bribery
- Acceptance of gratuities

**Misconduct**, such as:

- Excessive Force
- Unlawful arrest
- Harassment
- Rudeness

**\*\*Making false or misleading reports against officers or other employees may be cause for criminal and/or civil action against those complaining.\*\***

All citizen complaints are investigated; some by first line supervisors and others by assigned investigators.

Before any complaint is handled in a formal manner, the complaining party must be willing to complete a written statement and complete a complaint affirmation citing the truthfulness and accuracy of the information/complaint.

Although complaints can be made anonymously, these complaints are scrutinized by the Chief of Police. Anonymous complainant's information can be released to the accused officer if the complaint is found to be without merit and defaming to the employee.

Completed formal investigations are reviewed by the Chief of Police for final findings.

*Our core values include:*

*Integrity*                      *Discipline*

*Professionalism*           *Watchful*

*Respect*                        *Dedication*

*Performance*                *Excellence*

## *Complaint Dispositions*

**Unfounded** – The incident did not occur or the officer wasn't involved

**Exonerated** – Incident occurred, but officer acted lawfully and proper.

**Not Sustained** – Insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation

**Sustained** – Allegation is supported by sufficient evidence

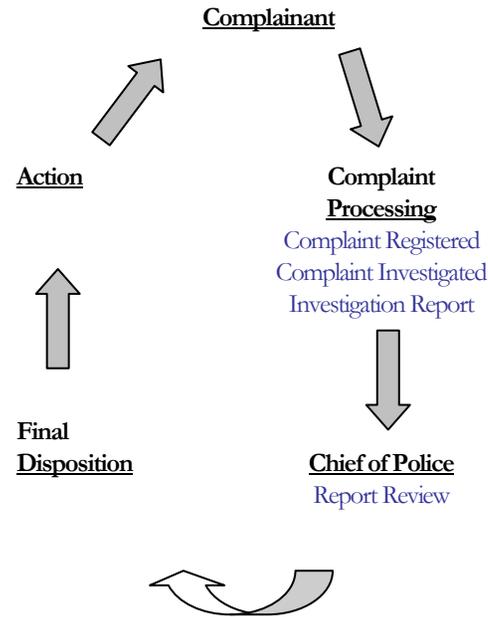
**Policy/Training Deficiency** – Incident occurred but linked to policy or training issue.

In all cases, the officer is notified of the disposition.

If a complaint is sustained, there are several levels of discipline that can occur, the first and foremost is officer counseling and/or training.

The intent of all discipline is to deter unacceptable conduct and therefore we encourage the use of positive measures as compared to punitive measures to solve problems. It is understood that punishment may have to be administered dependent upon the nature and severity of the misconduct.

Negative disciplinary action can result in verbal or written reprimands, suspension, and/or dismissal.



### **Complaint Procedure Summary:**

1. Call or visit the police department and speak with the Officer in Charge.
2. Complaint is processed and investigated
3. The investigation or inquiry is reviewed
4. Chief of Police makes final disposition
5. Involved officer and complainant are notified of final result of complaint

## WILLISTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

### *Citizen Complaint Procedure*



[www.town.williston.vt.us/police](http://www.town.williston.vt.us/police)

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