

Filing a Complaint Against the Seattle Police FAQ's

WHY FILE A COMPLAINT?

Filing a complaint ensures that employees of the Police Department are being held accountable for their actions and that they are following Police Department rules and laws.

WHO INVESTIGATES THE COMPLAINT?

The department that investigates complaints is the **Office of Professional Accountability**. The Director of OPA is a civilian - not a police officer. All investigations are fair, thorough and reviewed by an independent auditor.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED "MISCONDUCT"?

If an employee does something that is against Police Department policy or against the law, this is misconduct. Misconduct ranges from everything between a police officer using derogatory language to excessive use of force.

HOW DO I FILE A COMPLAINT?

You can use OPA's website seattle.gov/opa, email opa@seattle.gov, call 206-684-8797 or come into the office 720 3rd Ave to speak with an investigator.

HOW MUCH TIME WILL IT TAKE?

Filing a complaint does not take much time. The investigators will speak to you about the incident and may follow-up with you to ask more questions. You do not need to come into the office unless you want to.

WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO FILE A COMPLAINT?

The best way to file a complaint is to have as much information as possible about the incident to help the investigators look into it. For example, the date and time of the incident, location of the incident, the name/badge of the officer if you have it and the names of witnesses if you have them. If you have photos or videos, it's helpful to send these too.

IS IT SAFE?

Yes. You will not speak with the officer who you are filing a complaint against. You will not be retaliated against.

You can file a complaint anonymously if you want to, but we prefer having contact information to be able to ask you more questions and gather more information during the investigation.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I FILE A COMPLAINT?

One of our investigators looks into the complaint. After gathering evidence, the Director decides whether the incident needs to be fully investigated or if the employee's supervisor can handle the issue with the employee. OPA will let you know how your complaint will be handled. Generally, complaints take 3 – 6 months to investigate and complete.