

# Office of Police Accountability

## How to File a Complaint



### What is a complaint?

The Office of Police Accountability (OPA) processes allegations of misconduct involving Seattle Police Department (SPD) employees. Violations can range from unprofessional behavior to biased-policing to excessive force.

### Who can file a complaint?

Anyone can file a complaint; they can even be filed anonymously. We also accept complaints from outside agencies or witnesses reporting on behalf of others.

### Is filing a complaint safe?

We intend for our process to be safe. Disclosing personal information is voluntary. You will not be asked about your immigration status. You will not need to speak with the employee you are filing a complaint against.

### How do I file a complaint?



SUBMIT A WEB FORM  
[seattle.gov/opa](http://seattle.gov/opa)



CALL US  
**206-684-8797**



EMAIL US  
[opa@seattle.gov](mailto:opa@seattle.gov)



VISIT US  
**720 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. Floor 18**

### What happens after I file a complaint with OPA?

OPA will review the complaint and decide if it requires investigation or whether the employee's supervisor can resolve it. We will provide you with a case number so you can track your complaint status online. An OPA investigator will then attempt to contact you to gather additional information.

### What if my complaint requires more investigation?

An investigator will conduct additional work on the case, which will generally include interviewing the involved employees. The OPA Director will review the case and make a recommendation to the Chief of Police. The Chief will make the final decision—with our input—on whether (and what) discipline should be imposed. We will send you a letter to share this information.

We will try to resolve the complaint quickly, thoroughly, and objectively. An investigation generally takes about six months.



## Can my complaint be resolved through mediation?

OPA selects complaints for mediation based on criteria consistent with national best practices. This includes an assessment of the type and severity of the allegation, as well as the likelihood for a successful resolution. If you are willing to engage in a discussion—led by a neutral third party—with the SPD employee about whom you filed a complaint, please let us know. To learn about the OPA mediation program, visit our website at [seattle.gov/opa/complaints/mediation-program](http://seattle.gov/opa/complaints/mediation-program).

**Mediation** is a voluntary alternative to traditional complaint resolution. It uses a professional mediator to help community members and SPD employees exchange perspectives and build understanding.

## The Investigation Process



**“SPD employee”** means everyone who works for the Department, including sworn law enforcement personnel, civilians, 911/radio personnel, parking enforcement officers, etc.

## What is OPA?

The Office of Police Accountability is responsible for processing allegations of misconduct involving Seattle Police Department (SPD) employees. We also engage with the community about police oversight, recommend revisions to SPD policy, and monitor serious uses of police force. We operate outside of SPD and have civilian leadership. The rest of our staff is a mix of civilians and SPD sergeants.

**Learn more  
about OPA**

Visit our website  
[seattle.gov/opa](http://seattle.gov/opa)

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Seattle Office of  
Police Accountability

@SeattleOPA