

Filing an Inquiry, Complaint or Commendation

An inquiry, complaint or compliment can be filed by letter, telephone, email, UMPD website or in person. Any Department employee whose duties involve contact with the public may accept an inquiry. If your filing is about personnel, you should contact the on-duty police supervisor in person or call Dispatch (413) 545-2121. The supervisor will ensure your inquiry is directed to the proper personnel.

Please be prepared to provide the date, time and location of the event; the names or ID numbers of the department employee(s) involved (if known); and the name, address, and telephone number of any possible witnesses.

If your inquiry appears to be based on a misunderstanding of acceptable or desired conduct, procedures, or practices, the employee may offer an explanation. If you are not satisfied with the explanation, you may insist upon speaking with the employee's supervisor.

Complaint Investigation Procedures

Once your inquiry or complaint is received, it will be thoroughly investigated by personnel designated by the Chief of Police. The investigation will usually include a review of all applicable procedures, examination of evidence and interviews with witnesses. The length of time required to complete an investigation will be decided on a case by case.

The Chief of Police reviews every inquiry or complaint. This review is to assure that every investigation is handled thoroughly and objectively. If the Chief determines an employee violated department policies or procedures, appropriate corrective action will be taken. The Chief's review will also include examining ways to improve policies, procedures, practices and training.

Findings

You will receive written notification of the Chief's findings. There are four possible findings:

1. *Sustained* – The allegation(s) was proven to be true.
2. *Not Sustained* – The investigation failed to prove or disprove the allegation.

3. *Unfounded* – The investigation showed the complaint was unfounded or did not occur.

4. *Exonerated* – The investigation showed the alleged act did occur, but was justified and lawful under the circumstances.

Commending Exceptional Performance

The best way to commend the actions of a Police Department employee is to write a brief letter describing the circumstances and the actions you believe were exceptional. Information such as date, time and location will help identify the employee if you do not know the name. If you choose not to write, you may ask to speak with a supervisor and make a verbal commendation.

Commendations received by the Chief of Police are forwarded to the employee with a copy placed in their personnel file. Although our employees do not expect to be thanked for work they do, recognition for exceptional service is always appreciated. This feedback helps us to confirm that we are meeting the needs of our community.

Questions & Answers

Q: *What happens to an employee if he or she is found to have acted improperly?*

A: In some cases additional training is appropriate and is all that is needed. More serious instances may require disciplinary action such as a reprimand, suspension, or even termination. If a crime is alleged to have taken place, UMPD may work with the District Attorney's office on the investigation.

Q: *Will you tell me what discipline was imposed?*

A: State law prohibits revealing specific actions taken to discipline employees.

Q: *Do I have any guarantee that I will be satisfied?*

A: Although we cannot guarantee you will be satisfied, we do guarantee that your inquiry will be investigated thoroughly. You will be provided an opportunity to discuss the results with the Chief or the Chief's designee.



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HOW ARE WE DOING?

Citizen feedback such as inquiries, complaints and commendations are essential to running a professional police department. If you have any questions about a specific action taken by a member of UMPD, or if you have a recommendation on how we can improve our service, we encourage you to contact us.

<http://www.umass.edu/umpd/citizenform/>

Online reporting is sent directly to the Internal Affairs Office and the Chief of Police.

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Citizen's Guide to Filing Inquiries, Complaints, or Commendations



UMPD is committed to providing the highest quality of public service to our community. In order to be responsive it's important for us to gather feedback on a regular basis. Please review this guide or visit our website to provide us information you feel is important for us to know.

John Horvath
Chief of Police