

# *City of Darlington*

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

J.C.Davis - Chief of Police

### YOUR COMPLAINT IS IMPORTANT

The Darlington Police Department and its members are aware of the important responsibilities and duties they have as public servants and law enforcement officers. We operate under the constitutional guarantees afforded to everyone and under the laws that govern us all. In addition, we must maintain trust and integrity within the community we serve. As an organization, the Agency works diligently to provide the highest level of quality service. Policing is a very difficult and complex job in today's society, and we realize that mistakes can be made and that the actions of our personnel may fall short of your expectations. The courteous receipt of complaints, thorough and impartial investigation and just disposition of complaints are important in maintaining the high level of service we strive for and the confidence of our community. Citizen participation in the complaint process is critical to achieving those goals. We are committed to accepting and investigating complaints regarding the actions and performance of any member of the Agency.

### UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

A complaint may be filed with the Agency by calling 843-398-4025 and asking to speak to a supervisor or the Chief of Police, or in person at 400 Pearl St. Darlington, S.C. The Agency has developed a "Complaint and Inquiry Form" that will guide you in supplying the information generally needed for us to conduct an effective investigation. The form is available in person at the Darlington Police Department.

If you need assistance in filling out the form or want to speak with someone personally about your complaint, request to speak to an officer. If you want to make a complaint in person but are not able to travel, contact the Agency at 843-398-4026.

Whichever method you choose to file your complaint, please provide all information you have that would assist us in the investigation, including:

- Date, time, and location of the incident.
- Names, badge numbers, and/or car numbers of the Agency personnel involved.
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of any witnesses.

### THE INTERVIEW

A supervisor (or appointee of the Chief of Police) will usually review your complaint with you, either in person or by phone. There are occasions when the complaint actually involves

another Agency or where the supervisor may be able to explain the actions of our personnel to your satisfaction. In those cases, if you are satisfied with the explanation or assistance provided, then the matter will go no further. However, if the complaint is not resolved, it will be evaluated further by the Chief of Police and appropriate action will be taken.

## THE INVESTIGATION

The Chief of Police will review all complaints that are not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction and decide on a course of action. You may be asked for further information and/or to provide a sworn statement during the course of an investigation.

## HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE?

The Agency generally requires that complaint investigations be completed within 15 days of receipt of the complaint. The Chief of Police may extend that time due to circumstances that prevent completion of the investigation, such as difficulties in locating witnesses or evidence. You may contact the department at any time while your complaint is pending to check on the status of your complaint.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETE?

The Chief of Police will review each complaint investigation. After reviewing the case, the Chief of Police will decide if the facts and evidence warrant disciplinary charges against a member of the department or if other corrective action should be taken. For example, even if charges are not brought, the Chief of Police may decide that an officer should receive additional training or that Agency policies or procedures underlying the complaint should be changed.

## WHAT IF A MEMBER IS FOUND TO BE IN VIOLATION OF DEPARTMENTAL RULES, PROCEDURES OR POLICIES?

In the event that a supervisor or appointee of the Chief handles a complaint, he/she will provide the Chief of Police with his/her recommendations for any discipline or corrective action, based on the conduct involved and any charges brought. Depending on the severity of the violation, a range of penalties may be imposed, including written reprimand, suspension without pay, or termination from employment. Other corrective actions include re-training or counseling by supervisory or command staff. The Chief of Police is the final departmental authority for discipline.

## YOUR RIGHTS AFTER THE INVESTIGATION

You will be notified of the findings and disposition of your complaint. Please be sure to keep the Agency informed of any change in your address or contact information. If you are dissatisfied with the disposition of your complaint, you may make an appointment with the Chief of Police to discuss the complaint disposition.

## POLICY

Anyone who files a complaint against a member of the Agency shall be treated with courtesy and respect.

Notwithstanding the fact that a complaint has been filed, NO MEMBER OF THE AGENCY SHALL FAIL TO PROVIDE OR TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL AGENCY SERVICE AT ALL TIMES TO THE COMPLAINANT AND OTHERS INVOLVED IN THE COMPLAINT PROCESS. NO MEMBER OF THE AGENCY SHALL IMPROPERLY ATTEMPT TO DISSUADE SOMEONE FROM FILING A COMPLAINT OR RETALIATE AGAINST A COMPLAINANT OR WITNESSES. Any violation of these policies should be reported directly to the Chief of Police.