

CARTHAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CITIZEN COMPLIMENT & COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

HOW CITIZENS CAN COMPLIMENT OR FILE COMPLAINTS ON CARTHAGE POLICE OFFICERS
AND HOW THOSE COMPLIMENTS OR COMPLAINTS ARE HANDLED

COMPLIMENTING AN EMPLOYEE

As we recognize that conflicts between citizens and agency employees can arise, we also realize there are times when employees go above and beyond their call for duty. Law Enforcement employees, like everyone else, appreciate it when their good deeds are noticed. Too often they are remembered for the traffic tickets they issue or the arrests they must make, and not for the thousands of helping hands they extend.

If an Officer or Employee of the Carthage Police Department provides services you feel they should be commended for, please write the Chief a letter or note to that effect, giving your feelings on what the Officer or Employee has done that deserves commendation. The Chief will see that it gets to the employee and that a copy is placed in the employee's personnel file. This boosts their morale and encourages them and all other Officers and Employees of the Department to be more positive about themselves and the service they provide. We are proud of the good relationship we share with the community.

Our Mission is to provide a safe community where citizens can live, work, and raise their families without the fear of crime. We will seek out and prosecute those who disobey the laws of our land. We choose to do this with integrity, dignity, courage, courtesy, fairness, and compassion.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR COMPLAINT

The Carthage Police Department recognizes its employees are responsible for their conduct where the public is concerned. The department also acknowledges that, at certain times, conflicts between citizens and agency employees can arise. It is essential to the safety of our community that the relationship between police and citizens be built on confidence and trust. Law enforcement cannot be effective without this vital conviction by both entities.

Police Officers must be free to exercise their best judgment and initiate proper action in a reasonable, lawful, and impartial manner, without fear of reprisal. At the same time, they must observe the rights of all people. The complaint process and appropriate disciplinary procedures not only subject agency members to corrective action when they conduct themselves improperly, the guidelines also protect them from unwarranted criticism when they discharge their duties properly.

A disagreement over the validity of a traffic citation is not a complaint. Such disagreements should be directed to the court that has jurisdiction in the matter.

The Police Department realizes that confusion, different perceptions, or the timeliness of information sometimes will result in descriptions that produce different versions of the same incident. Beyond legitimate error, however, the deliberate making of a report the complainant knows to be false or misleading could constitute a violation of State Law.

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COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The Complaint process is designed to deal with each case factually and fairly. Citizens who file complaints are treated respectfully, and their accusations are taken seriously. All complaints are investigated thoroughly, and all findings are based on impartial evidence gained during the investigation.

However, many complaints can be explained satisfactorily by a visit or telephone call to the employee's supervisor, usually the Chief or the Assistant Chief. The supervisor will talk with you about your complaint and try to resolve it.

The Chief of Police and the Assistant Chief of Police are usually available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. to discuss your complaint about any member of the department.

Complaints may be lodged as a Formal or Informal Complaint. The Formal Complaint must be in writing, signed by the complainant and notarized. The Informal Complaint may be written or oral. All complaints will be dealt with in the same manner. Formal Complaints will be responded to in writing once the investigation is completed. Any Complaint can be made anonymously without giving your name. However, you cannot be informed of the internal review's results if you choose to remain anonymous. After a thorough investigation, the complaint will be classified into one of the following dispositions:

- Unfounded: Incident did not occur, or affected employee was not involved.
- Exonerated: Incident occurred, but actions taken were lawful and proper.
- Not Sustained: Insufficient evidence exists to prove the allegation.
- Sustained: Evidence is sufficient to prove the allegation.

Sustained allegations could result in additional training, counseling, written reprimand, suspension, or termination.

Although employees named in a complaint will at some point be required to respond to the specific allegation, they are not permitted access to cases under investigation. Complainants need not be concerned they will be subject to retribution for legitimately stating a complaint because procedures are in place to prevent this.

Complainants who have current criminal or traffic charges pending should be aware that the internal review process deals solely with department police matters and the conduct of agency employees. Regardless of the outcome of an internal investigation, existing criminal or traffic charges must be dealt with through the proper courts.

FINAL DETERMINATION ABOUT THE DISPOSITION OF ANY COMPLAINT
WILL BE MADE BY THE CHIEF OF POLICE