



## Personnel Complaints

All sheriff's departments in the State of California are required by law to have a process by which a citizen may make a complaint against Sheriff's personnel. This pamphlet will assist anyone who has occasion to make a complaint against any member of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department. Here are some of the questions we frequently encounter regarding our complaint procedures and processes:

**"What is a Citizen's Complaint?"** There are two types of personnel complaints. The first is an informal complaint. This complaint is nominally handled by the employee's supervisor for minor transgressions and is brought to the employee's attention by the supervisor.

The second type of complaint is a formal complaint. This is for more serious types of transgressions. The formal complaint is lodged with the employee's supervisor or the Watch Commander.

**"Who Can Make a Complaint?"** A personnel complaint may be made by anyone. However, if the complainant is under the age of 18, we require that the complainant be accompanied by a parent or an adult.

**"Will I Have to Testify if I Make a Complaint?"** A complainant does not normally have to testify in any formal hearing. During the investigation you, along with all witnesses, may be questioned concerning the incident. It is essential to any investigation to ask all pertinent questions and obtain factual information. Once an investigation is concluded, a disposition will be determined.

Employees of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department have the right to appeal any discipline recommended or imposed. In some cases these appeals may be heard by the Civil Service Commission comprised of five citizens from the community. You may be asked to testify at such a hearing.

## SONOMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



## CITIZEN COMMENDATION AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

**Bill Cogbill  
Sheriff - Coroner**

From:

To: Sheriff Bill Cogbill  
Sonoma County Sheriff's Department  
2796 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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## Commendations

Everyone enjoys receiving recognition for their efforts. Commendations, either verbal or written, are one of the best ways to let someone know that you appreciate their work. A commendation for an employee of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department is most often sent to the Sheriff. You may also advise the employee's supervisor or Watch Commander. Your comments can be made in person, by telephone, or by using the form in this brochure.

A commendation may address any event that you deem noteworthy on the part of an employee whom you believe should be recognized. This may range from the display of unusual courtesy or compassion to significant life-saving measures or heroic acts. We are interested in hearing about your observations of any commendable act or behavior.

All commendations are formally documented and the affected employees will be notified.

A commendation takes only a few minutes to write or communicate. It can go a long way to let the personnel of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department know how you feel about them and their service.

Use this form or send your letter to:

**Sheriff Bill Cogbill  
Sonoma County Sheriff's Department  
2796 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403**