

What is the function of the Office of Professional Standards (Internal Affairs)?

The Office of Professional Standards is responsible for receiving, processing, and supervising internal affairs investigations that involve allegations of criminal conduct and acts of misconduct lodged against members of the Plumsted Police Department. The Office of Professional Standards ensures that allegations filed against members of the Plumsted Township Police Department are thoroughly and objectively investigated to their logical conclusion. The Office of Professional Standards maintains a comprehensive index of all complaints received against all members. This information is submitted to the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office on an annual basis.

What does the Office of Professional Standards do?

The Office of Professional Standards has the responsibility to investigate all allegations of misconduct by members of the Plumsted Police Department, as well as review and adjudicate all minor complaints that generally are handled by immediate supervisors.

In addition, the Office of Professional Standards will review all firearm discharges by police personnel that are not related to training, all use of force incidents, all vehicular pursuits undertaken by police officers and all collisions involving department vehicles.

To whom does the Office of Professional Standards report?

The Office of Professional Standards reports directly to the Plumsted Chief of Police.

How do I file a complaint against an Officer or Employee of the Police Department?

Complaints will be accepted in person, by telephone, by letter or via email. It is preferred that the complaint be submitted in person, by the individual who is directly involved in the allegation, against the Plumsted Police Officer or employee. By so doing, as much pertinent information as possible will be elicited to effectively investigate the complaint.

Those individuals who wish to lodge a complaint on their own should complete Civilian Complaint Form IA-1, found on our website and submit accordingly.

- Generally, a superior officer or member of the Office of Professional Standards will receive the complaint. However, any police officer can accept a complaint as well.
- The complaint will be forwarded to the Office of Professional Standards for investigation.

The complaint will be investigated by the Office of Professional Standards or it will be forwarded to the appropriate superior for investigation.

All complaints of officer misconduct shall be accepted 24/7/365. Individual(s), regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, immigration status or those individuals under arrest or in custody and anonymous sources, may file a complaint. Those individuals who choose to file a complaint with the Office of Professional Standards are encouraged to do so as soon as practicable.

Additional information regarding the Internal Affairs process is located on the Civilian Complaint Information Sheet.

Click www.njoag.gov/iapp to visit the New Jersey Office of Attorney General for the IA-1 Complaint Intake Form and Civilian Complaint Information Sheet in multiple languages.

How are complaints investigated?

Every complaint is be routed to a superior officer or a specially trained internal affairs investigator who will conduct a thorough and objective investigation. If the complaint alleges minor violations of departmental policies or procedures or the complaint alleges acts of discourtesy, the complaint will be forwarded through the chain of command to the department member's immediate supervisor for investigation.

- The complainant may be requested to assist in the investigation by submitting a detailed statement about what occurred or providing other important information.
- All complaints against law enforcement officers or employees are thoroughly investigated. Complainants will be advised in writing of the final determination.
- If the investigation indicates that a crime may have been committed, the Ocean County Prosecutor will be notified. The complainant may be requested to testify in court.
- If the investigation results in an officer being charged with a violation of department rules or regulations, the complainant may be requested to testify in a departmental hearing.
- If the investigation indicates that the complaint is unfounded or that the officer acted appropriately, the matter will be closed.
- All disciplinary hearings are closed to the public unless the defendant officer or employee requests an open hearing.

Do any other agencies investigate complaints made against Plumsted Police Department members?

Yes. The Ocean County Prosecutor's Office conducts a review of any complaint that alleges that a crime was committed by a Plumsted Police Officer/employee.

What rights do Police Officers have during an investigation?

Police Officers are protected by the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights and their labor contract. Internal investigations remain confidential until they are concluded. By law, no person involved in the investigation, to include the complainant, witnesses, investigated members, or the Investigators may disclose any information regarding the investigation until it is concluded.

Is there any risk in making a complaint against a member?

No. However, if a person deliberately lodges a false complaint and statement against a police officer or employee, that person may be criminally prosecuted or held civilly liable. N.J.S. 2C:28-3 Unsworn Falsification to Authorities states, "A person commits a crime of the fourth degree if he makes a written false statement which he does not believe to be true, on or pursuant to a form bearing notice, authorized by law, to the effect that false statements made therein are punishable." Those who provide false information to members of the Office of Professional Standards will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

What happens if a citizen is uncomfortable about reporting their complaint directly to the Plumsted Township Police Department or the complaint concerns the Chief or the entire department?

In such instances the complaint may be submitted through the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office or the Office of Professional Standards. The Ocean County Prosecutor's Office may be reached at 732.929.2027.

What happens when the investigation is concluded?

Once submitted, the complaint form will be forwarded to the Office of Professional Standards for review and investigation. Upon conclusion of the investigation the complainant will be advised of the outcome in written form.

Complaints from the public, whether substantiated or not, increases the awareness of agency leadership to actual or potential problems, as well as the perceptions of the community. This feedback will ultimately assist in determining whether the mission statement and goals of the Plumsted Police Department are being attained.

While every member of the Plumsted Police Department is trained in the proper receipt and handling of individual complaints, the complainant may contact Lieutenant Jason Reilly at 609-758-7077 x 201 or via email at jreilly@plumstedpolice.org with additional questions, information or issues.

