

# Atlanta Police Department

## Commending an Officer &

## How the Complaint Process Works



## OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Internal Investigations Unit

404-546-5945

404-979-7468 (E-fax)

[www.Atlantapd.org](http://www.Atlantapd.org)

**Erika Shields**  
Chief of Police

## Summary of the Complaint Process

### Step One: Initiate Complaint

- In person
- By Mail
- By Email
- By Telephone

### Step Two: Internal Investigations Unit

- Complaint is documented
- Complaint is reviewed
- Complaint is investigated
- Recommendations on Disposition
- Recommendations on Discipline

### Step Three: Final Disposition

- Sustained
- Not Sustained
- Exonerated
- Unfounded
- Exceptionally Closed

### Step Four: Notification to

### Complainant

- At the end of a complete and thorough investigation by the Office of Professional Standards, you will receive the official disposition of your complaint in writing via U.S. mail or email.

There are other proactive corrective actions that might be taken by the Department in regards to an investigation:

*Counseling*

*Training*

*Psychological Intervention*

*Participating in a Substance Abuse Program*

If you would like to register a complaint or if you have any questions or concerns involving the complaint process and procedures contact:

**The Office of Professional Standards**  
950 Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard NW, Atlanta, GA  
30318

404-546-5945

Office hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Complaints can also be registered at the listed Atlanta Police Department Precincts and on line at [www.Atlantapd.org](http://www.Atlantapd.org):

**Zone 1**  
2315 Bankhead Hwy.  
(404) 799-2487

**Zone 4**  
1125 Cascade Cir.  
(404) 756-1903

**Zone 2**  
3120 Maple Drive  
Atlanta, GA 30305

**Zone 5**  
190 Marietta St.  
(404) 658-7830

**Zone 3**  
880 Cherokee Ave.  
(404) 624-0674

**Zone 6**  
2025 Hosea Williams Dr.  
(404) 658-6782

## Commending An Officer

Any person who wishes to commend an officer or employee of the Department may do so by contacting the Office of the Chief of Police, the Office of Professional Standards, or a supervisor at any worksite in the Department. Please provide as much information as possible about the officer as well as the reason he or she should be commended. In addition, please provide your name and contact information in order to contact you if necessary (all information will be kept confidential).

## The Complaint Process

The Department provides thorough, impartial investigations of all allegations of employee misconduct and imposes appropriate disciplinary actions for all sustained employee work rule or city ordinance violations. The Department strives for consistency in its application of discipline. For minor policy infractions, the Department imposes disciplinary actions which are in accordance with the philosophy of progressive discipline, and provides consideration for mitigating and/or aggravating factors. These include: employee intent, past performance, degree of culpability, discipline history, severity of infraction, acceptance of responsibility by the employee and other relevant factors.

### Who may register a complaint?

A complaint may be made by any citizen, or employee of the City of Atlanta.

Every complaint, regardless of its nature, is appropriately investigated. Complaints of minor violations may be assigned to members of the employee's chain of command for investigation.

Complaints may be submitted at the Office of Professional Standards or any work site of the Atlanta Police Department

## The Internal Investigation Unit

The Internal Investigation Unit of OPS investigates allegations of employee misconduct of a serious nature and maintains records of all complaints made against Department employees.

## Acceptance of Complaints

Complaints against any Atlanta Police Department employee will be accepted from any source at the Office of Professional Standards or by any supervisor at any facility in the Department, regardless of the location of the alleged occurrence. If the complaint is clearly Priority II, the supervisor may put the complainant directly in touch with the employee's supervisor or take the complainant to the employee's supervisor.

### Complaints are defined in two categories:

**Priority I** - Allegations of employee misconduct of a major nature that are usually investigated by the Office of Professional Standards

**Priority II** - Any complaints not meeting any of the criteria for Priority I, including allegations that involve a vehicular accident, discourtesy, or other lesser misconduct by Departmental employees. Priority II complaints are normally investigated by the employee's supervisor.

Dispositions of complaints are classified as the following:

**Sustained:** The investigative file provides sufficient evidence to support the finding that the employee committed the violation.

**Not Sustained:** There is insufficient evidence to sustain a finding that the employee committed the violation.

**Exonerated:** The incident occurred but the employee's actions were justified, lawful, and proper.

**Unfounded:** Complainant admits to false allegation, the charge is false or not factual, or the accused employee was not involved in the incident.

**Exceptionally Closed:** Reasons outside the Department's control prevent it from continuing or completing its investigation of a complaint, and/or from charging and prosecuting an accused employee when sufficient evidence exists to charge the accused employee. Examples may include: the employee resigns, dies, or is no longer employed by the Department.

In all cases, employees and complainants are notified in writing of the disposition of the complaint.

There are two types of Disciplinary Action which can be recommended for a sustained complaint:

#### *Non-Adverse Action*

*Oral Admonishment*

*Written Reprimand*

#### *Adverse Action*

*Suspension without pay*

*Demotion*

*Dismissal*