

What is an Internal Affairs investigation?

The process of gathering facts to prove, or disprove, allegations of misconduct against Department employees.

Who will investigate my complaint?

Any member of the department can receive a complaint. The Sheriff's Office administration will determine if the investigation will be conducted by the employee's supervisor or the Internal Affairs Unit.

What types of complaints does the Kern County Sheriff's Office recognize?

Both "informal" and "formal" complaints are recognized. An "informal" complaint is a minor issue that may be handled by the employee's supervisor with no other action. A "formal" complaint is any complaint that is not an informal complaint, and is handled through official channels and documentation.

How can I assist in making a complaint?

- Complete a "Citizen's Complaint Form", which is a written format to express your concerns.
- If requested, provide a detailed taped statement.
- Help identify evidence and witnesses if possible.
- Identify any damaged property or injuries.
- Provide an address and contact numbers where you can be reached for follow up information.

How will I know when the investigation into my complaint is complete?

You will be notified by letter of the outcome or "disposition" of your complaint within 30 days of the final findings.

What if I have questions?

You may contact the Internal Affairs Unit at (661) 391-7470

Mission Statement

The Kern County Sheriff's Office is committed to work in partnership with our community to enhance the safety, security, and quality of life for the residents and visitors of Kern County through professional public safety services.

Headquarters

1350 Norris Rd
Bakersfield CA 93308
(661) 391-7500

Substation Phone Numbers:

East Bakersfield
(661) 868-1500

Rosedale
(661) 868-6434

Buttonwillow
(661) 764-5613

McFarland City
(661) 792-2121

Wasco
(661) 758-7266

Lamont
(661) 868-5750

Frazier Park
(661) 245-3440

Taft
(661) 763-8550

Kern Valley/
Walker Basin
(760)549-2100

Ridgecrest/
Inyokern
(760) 384-5800

Golden Hills
(Tehachapi)
(661) 823-6060

Boron
(760) 762-6666

Mojave
(661) 824-7130

Rosamond
(661) 256-9700

KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Citizen Complaint Process



The Kern County Sheriff's Office strives to provide professional service. Citizen input, both positive and negative, is vital to our organization's goals.

The Law and Department Policy

What to Expect

California Penal Code Section 832.5 requires agencies that employ peace officers establish a complaint investigation procedure. It also requires that a written description of the procedure be available to the public.

Complaints will be received in a courteous and impartial manner. No attempt will be made to dissuade a citizen from making a complaint.

What is a complaint?

A complaint is an allegation of misconduct by an employee, which if found to be true, could result in disciplinary action.

Who can make a complaint?

A complaint may be made by anyone who is dissatisfied with the conduct of an employee.

How to file a complaint

You may file a complaint in person, or by writing to the Kern County Sheriff's Office at 1350 Norris Road, Bakersfield, CA 93308. You may telephone the watch commander at (661) 861-3110 or you can call the Internal Affairs Unit at (661) 391-7470.

Complaint investigations can be lengthy depending on the number of witnesses and the seriousness of the allegations. Additional time is then required for review and determining a disposition of the allegations of misconduct.

Dispositions

After all the evidence and interviews are obtained, the investigator files a report which is reviewed by command staff personnel.

The Sheriff's Office administration reviews the completed investigation and at the conclusion of the review, one of four dispositions will be determined for each allegation of misconduct. They are:

Unfounded: The investigation conclusively proved that the act, or acts, complained of did not occur. This finding also applies when the individual member(s) named were not involved in the act or acts which may have occurred.

Exonerated: The acts which provided the basis for the complaint or allegation occurred, however, investigation revealed that they were justified, lawful and proper.

Not Sustained: Investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegation made in the complaint or to conclusively disprove such allegations.

Sustained: The investigation disclosed sufficient evidence to clearly prove the allegation made in the complaint.

Confidentiality

California law states sworn peace officer personnel records are confidential, and can only be divulged through a special court order during criminal or civil proceedings.

This means you will be notified of the disposition of the complaint, but by law the Department cannot divulge any information regarding discipline or other administrative actions.



Employee Rights

Typically complaints reflect legitimate concerns, however, occasionally a complaint is fictitious and made with malice. Police Officers also have the right to review and respond to allegations of misconduct, as well as any proposed discipline from such allegations.