



RUSSELLVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number:  
Section:  
Original Date:  
Revised Date:

## **PURPOSE**

All Russellville Fire Department members will respond to the public in a courteous, caring and appropriate manner. All citizen concerns and/or complaints regarding Department members and/or services will be addressed in a prompt, courteous, and positive manner. The purpose of this policy is to provide a means to receive, investigate, and resolve complaints regarding a Department member.

## **POLICY**

Citizen complaints and/or concerns range from individual performance or nonperformance to the overall level of service delivery provided. Management and supervisory personnel will attempt to service and resolve complaints at the lowest appropriate level in the Department.

All complaints, including those from citizens wishing to remain anonymous, will be documented on a Complaint Record Form. The form will be filled out as completely as possible. The completed form will be forwarded to the Fire Chief where it will be assigned a control number and assigned to the appropriate Division/Section for investigation. Complaints related to Operations personnel will be forwarded to the appropriate Battalion Chief for investigation.

All complaints to be considered for action by the Department, shall meet the following criteria:

1. A complaint shall be verbal, in writing, or writing via email. Verbal complaints shall be transcribed and signed by the complainant. Hearsay or "second hand" complaints shall not be accepted or investigated by the Department.
2. The complainant must provide the Department with his/her name, address, telephone number and email address. In no case will the Department accept or investigate a complaint where the complainant has not made his/her identity known.

### **Investigating Complaints**

Each complaint received by the Department will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. Regardless of severity, each complaint should be regarded as an opportunity to examine our customer service at the point of contact.

Unless the complainant requests "no contact" the investigating officer should contact the complainant as soon as possible to inform the complainant that their concern is being addressed. Upon contact, the following steps should be performed:

1. Inform the complainant of your name and rank and how you relate to the area of concern.
2. Restate the complaint as you understand it.
3. Ask if your understanding of the complaint is correct.

Approved

Fire Chief

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4. Reconcile any discrepancies.
5. Ask the complainant if they would like you to contact them when investigation is complete.
6. THANK THE COMPLAINANT FOR BRINGING THE CONCERNS TO YOUR ATTENTION.
7. Interview the individual/crew that the complaint was lodged against, and document the results.
8. Discuss the call/incident that generated the complaint.
9. Ask if anything unusual occurred.
10. Describe the incident as related by the complainant.
11. Discuss any discrepancies.
12. The complaint shall be reviewed at a special meeting called for that purpose.

An agenda shall be published and adhered to.

The following steps shall be taken in the complaint review process:

1. The violation of policy or protocol shall be defined.
2. The impact of the complaint shall be evaluated.
3. The individual/crew that the complaint was lodged against shall be given time to speak on the issue of the complaint including the opportunity to present supporting documentation.
4. Counseling, remedial, and/or disciplinary action shall be considered and/or ordered as deemed appropriate.
5. The complainant shall, to the extent allowed under confidentiality statutes, be notified of the outcome of the complaint review process.

### **Disposition**

After considering all available information, the investigating officer will make one of the following findings:

UNFOUNDED: The alleged act did not occur.

EXONERATED: The act occurred but was justified, lawful and proper.

NOT SUSTAINED: The investigation produced information insufficient to prove or disprove the allegation.

SUSTAINED: All or part of the act occurred as alleged. (A finding of "SUSTAINED" must be based on the existence of substantial fact in support of reasonable proof.)

Approved

Fire Chief

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