

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR COMPLAINT

The Runnels County Sheriff's Office recognizes that its employees are responsible for their conduct and accountable to the public. The Sheriff also acknowledges that sometimes conflicts arise between citizens and employees. It is essential to the safety of our community that the relationship law enforcement and citizens is built on confidence and trust. Law enforcement cannot be effective without this vital relationship.

Peace Officers have the authority by law to initiate proper action in a reasonable, lawful, and impartial manner without fear of reprisal. At the same time, they must observe the rights of all people. The complaint process and appropriate disciplinary procedures not only subject agency members to corrective action when they conduct themselves improperly, the guidelines also protect them from unwarranted criticism when they discharge their duties properly. The complaint process is designed to deal with each case factually and fairly. Citizens who file complaints are treated respectfully and their accusations are taken seriously. All complaints are investigated thoroughly, and all findings are based on impartial evidence gained during the investigation.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Many complaints can be explained satisfactorily by a visit or telephone call to the Sheriff's Office employee's supervisor. The supervisor will talk to you about your complaint and try to resolve it.

A disagreement over the validity of a traffic violation is not a complaint, and should be

directed to the appropriate court having jurisdiction over the matter.

Complaints may be initiated in person, over the phone or in writing. However, the Government Code of the State of Texas requires that in order for a complaint to be considered by the Sheriff, it must be in writing and signed by the person making the complaint. Complaint investigations are also required by law to be completed within 180 days of the occurrence of the alleged misconduct, due to this typically, complaints will not be accepted more than 30 days after the alleged incident occurred. A copy of the signed complaint may be provided to the involved officer before an investigation or disciplinary action may be taken.

DISPOSITIONS

After a thorough investigation, the complaint will be classified in one of the following ways:

Unfounded: The incident did not occur, or the affected employee was not involved.

Exonerated: The action complained of was determined to be lawful, proper and in accordance with Office rules and procedures.

Not Sustained: There is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation.

Cancelled: The investigation cannot be completed because the employee no longer works for the Runnels County Sheriff's Office, or the complainant refused to cooperate.

Sustained: The allegation is true and the action of the employee was inconsistent with Office rules and procedures.