

# CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO MAKING COMMENDATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

## Our Mission Statement

The Mission of the Holliston Police Department is to achieve effective, efficient, and professional policing in partnership with the community, helping to secure a safe and just community in which human rights and responsibilities are properly respected and balanced.

*In striving to accomplish our mission, we embody our core values with great PRIDE.*

**P**ROFESSIONALISM through an elite and diverse team of trained men and women.

**R**ESPECT for ourselves and others through our words and actions.

**I**NTEGRITY through adherence to standards and values that foster public trust.

**D**EDICATION to service.

**E**QUALITY through fair and unprejudiced application of the law.

This mission will be accomplished in partnership with all levels of government and the public, through quality law enforcement services and education based upon high ethical, professional, and legal standards.

## How Are We Doing?

The Holliston Police Department is committed to providing the best service possible. Feedback from the public is essential if we are to succeed in this goal. If you have questions or comments concerning our operational procedures, or recommendations on how we can improve our service, you may contact the police department directly. The Holliston Police Department is committed to providing professional law enforcement services to the citizens and visitors of our Town. In order to be responsive to the needs of our community, we encourage citizen input. Your constructive comments about our service, good or bad, will help us to improve and achieve our goal of providing the highest quality service possible.

## Commending Exceptional Performance

The best way to commend the performance of a Holliston Police Officer is to write a brief letter or email describing the incident and the actions the employee demonstrated which you felt were exceptional. Information such as the date, time, and location will help identify the employee if you do not know his/her name. If you choose not to write, you may speak with the individual's supervisor and make a verbal commendation. Commendations received will be forwarded to the employee with a copy placed in his/her personnel file. Although our employees do not expect to be thanked for everything they do, recognition of exceptional service is always appreciated. This kind of feedback helps us to know if we are doing a good job.

## **Making an Inquiry or Complaint**

An inquiry or complaint can be made by letter, email, telephone, or in person. Complaints against personnel should be directed to the on-duty supervisor or his designee. If your inquiry or complaint appears to be based on a misunderstanding or a lack of knowledge of acceptable or desired conduct, procedures, or practices, the supervisor may offer an explanation. If you are not satisfied with his/her explanation, you may request to speak with the Chief of Police. Please be prepared to provide the date, time, and location of the event; the name of the Officer involved (if known); and the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any possible witnesses.

## **Responsibility Yours and Ours**

The Holliston Police Department views all complaints against its employees very seriously and actively pursues investigations of misconduct. For this reason, you must ensure that your complaint is based on facts. False reporting in an attempt to unjustly subject a Holliston Police Officer to undeserved discipline or slander, or place his/her employment in jeopardy can result in criminal charges or civil liability.

## **Investigation Procedures**

Once an inquiry or complaint is received, the review/investigation process begins. A complaint investigation will usually include a review of all applicable reports, policies and procedures, examination of any evidence or medical records, and interviews with all parties and witnesses involved. This may take several weeks to investigate/review; where as a simple inquiry may only take a few days to complete.

## **Questions and Answers**

**Q:** Is there any risk in making a complaint against an employee?

**A:** No, but if a person deliberately makes a false complaint and statement against a member, that person may be criminally prosecuted or civilly liable.

**Q:** What happens when an investigation is initiated?

**A:** The complainant and the department employee will be notified that the case is under investigation.

**Q:** What happens when an investigation is concluded?

**A:** The complainant will be informed as to the outcome of their complaint.

**Q:** What happens to an employee if he/she is found to have acted improperly?

**A:** Depending on the severity of the conduct, dispositions of the investigation can range from retraining, to evaluations, to discipline.

**Q:** What happens if a complaint cannot be proven or is not true?

**A:** Police Officers must be provided with certain rights, just as all citizens are. Complaints must be supported by sufficient evidence. If there is insufficient evidence to prove an allegation, the employee will be cleared of the charge.

