COMMENDATIONS, INQUIRIES, OR COMPLAINTS

The Santa Clara Fire Department Community Risk Reduction Division encourages commendations from our community on ways to improve our services.
We welcome commendations for personnel performing their duties exceptionally well and encourage submitting inquiries and complaints about performance, actions, policy, and/or procedures that could be improved. Constructive comments about our service help us maintain our high level of service and foster a strong relationship with the community.

Commending Exceptional Performance Procedure

Recognition of exceptional performance is also valuable to the community feedback process. Commendations are among the best ways to let us know you appreciate our staff's dedication and hard work. Commendations the department receives are forwarded to the employee, and a copy is placed in their file. Your commendation will also be posted on the Community Risk Reductions bulletin board to be read by all employees. Although our employees don't expect to be thanked for everything they do, recognition of exceptional service is always appreciated.

Inquiry Procedures

Citizen's Inquiry: any contact with a citizen about an issue of concern that does not require a formal investigation. The Citizen's Inquiry process seeks to resolve the issue at an informal level, utilizing discussion, explanation, or clarification to the citizen's satisfaction. Citizens' Inquiries are generally handled by the supervising deputy fire marshals, assistant fire marshal, or fire marshal. A Citizen's Inquiry that is not resolved can become a Citizen's Complaint.

Complaint Procedures

Citizen's Complaint: a formal documentation involving allegations that may require an administrative and/or criminal investigation for one or both of the following:

1. A complaint against personnel; and/or
2. A complaint against department policy and/or procedure.

All Citizens' Complaints are forwarded to the Deputy Fire Chief of Administration and Fire Marshal for review. The Deputy Chief will then assign the complaint to the appropriate Supervisor for follow-up. The investigation will usually include reviewing all applicable reports, policies, and procedures, examining evidence, and interviewing involved parties and witnesses.

How Long Will It Take

A simple complaint might take only a day to complete, while a complex complaint might take several months to investigate and review. The reporting party will be notified every 30 days of the progress of the investigation.

Completion of the Investigation

The Deputy Fire Chief of Administration will review the complaint findings. If the Deputy Chief determines that an employee violated Department policy or procedures, appropriate corrective

action will be taken. The Deputy Chief's review will also include improving policies, procedures, and training. This review is to ensure that the investigation was handled thoroughly and objectively. At the end of the investigation, the reporting party will receive written notification of the Deputy Chief's findings. State Law prohibits us from releasing specific details concerning personnel actions.

Notification of Findings

You will receive written notification of the findings in the following form:

Personnel complaint findings will be designated:

- **Sustained**: The allegation made in the complaint was proven.
- **Not Sustained**: The investigation failed to prove or disprove the allegation.
- **Unfounded**: The investigation shows that the alleged act did not occur.
- **Exonerated**: The investigation shows that the alleged act did occur but was justified, lawful and proper under the circumstances.
- **No Finding**: Insufficient information available to conduct an investigation.

Policy/Procedural findings

In complaints against Department/Division policy and/or procedures, the Deputy Fire Chief of Administration or designee may find that the policy or procedure is either: **Appropriate as Written** or **Is in need of Revision**. Complaints sustained against policy and/or procedures will be sustained against the Department/Division and not the office involved.

How to Make a Citizen Inquiry or Complaint

An inquiry, complaint, or commendation can be made in person, by phone, or by email. A form is provided in Exhibit 1 below outlining the required information.

Santa Clara Fire Department
Community Risk Reduction Division
1675 Lincoln Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050
Office: 408-615-4970
Email: crrd@santaclaraca.gov

Exhibit 1 - Inquiry or Complaint Form

INQUIRY OR COMPLAINT FORM

Name:_____ **Address:**_____

Phone:_____ **Email:**_____

Incident Date & Time:_____ **Incident Case #:**_____

Incident Type & Location:_____

Specific Inquiry/Complaint:_____

Employees Involved (if Known):_____

Witnesses:_____

The Following Happened:_____