



Know Your Rights: Complaint Rights in Dallas



The Office of Community Police Oversight (OCPO) reviews and independently investigates police misconduct allegations to promote trust between the community, the City of Dallas, and the Dallas Police Department (DPD). If you think you have experienced police misconduct, the OCPO may be able to assist you.

Is the OCPO a part of the DPD?

No, OCPO is a civilian-led, impartial agency that operates independently from the DPD.

How many days do you have to file a complaint?

All complaints will be accepted and reviewed when they are received. Personnel complaints will not be investigated if more than 60 days have passed since the alleged incident, unless:

- The complaint involves a criminal violation, in which case the criminal statute of limitations will apply. However, this will not prevent the Dallas Police Department from taking disciplinary action if necessary to maintain the Department's integrity.
- The complainant can demonstrate good cause for not making the complaint within the specified time limit.

If I am in jail, do I have the right to file a complaint?

Yes, you have that right; it doesn't matter whether you are currently incarcerated. Our investigator or DPD's Internal Affairs Division Detective can visit city or county jails to interview complainants. Or you can mail it into our office.

Can you file a complaint as a third-party complainant?

No, you cannot file a complaint as a third-party complainant. Allegations from a third party may be considered at the discretion of the Internal Affairs Division. These allegations must be in writing, signed by a person with first-hand knowledge of the incident, and must be brought within the time limit for accepting formal complaints.

Can I file a complaint without knowing the officer's name and badge number?

Yes, we can identify the officer using DPD records.

What should I do if I experience retaliation for filing a complaint?

If you suspect retaliation, contact the OCPO immediately. We will refer the matter to DPD's Internal Affairs Division and may open a new investigation if necessary.

What happens after I file a complaint?

You will receive a letter from our office or Internal Affairs Division notifying you that your complaint has been received.

Staff at OCPO and DPD's Internal Affairs Division will determine if it falls within our jurisdiction. If your complaint is not in our jurisdiction, it is referred to the appropriate agency or entity to investigate the incident. If it is within our jurisdiction, you will receive a letter informing you of our next steps.

Jurisdiction

The OCPO has the authority to review or investigate critical incidents and complaints of alleged misconduct committed only by members of the DPD. Complaints against members of police departments other than the DPD must be filed with the appropriate local or state authority.

How are complaints resolved?

Once you file a complaint, the OCPO and the Dallas Police Department's Internal Affairs Division will review the allegations to determine the necessary investigation type:

- **Control Number (CN)** – For allegations that could result in a written reprimand or higher. These complaints are investigated by the Internal Affairs Division.
- **Division Referral (DR)** – For less severe allegations that could result in corrective action of Advice and Instruction, Documented Counseling, or a Supervisors

- **Division Referral (DR) *continued*** – Report of Correction. These complaints are investigated by the accused officer’s division.
- **No Investigation (NI)** – For cases that the Internal Affairs Division will not investigate. For example, allegations of misconduct received after 60 days.
- **Public Integrity (PI)** – For allegations of criminal conduct by police officers. These complaints are investigated by the Public Integrity Unit.
- **Independent Investigation** – In some cases, OCPO may conduct its own independent investigation, gathering evidence and presenting findings to the CPOB.
- **Mediation** – Mediation provides an opportunity for civilians and police officers to meet in a safe, quiet, and private space with a trained and impartial mediator to talk confidentially about what happened. Mediation is a voluntary process—all parties must agree to participate. You can request mediation on your complaint form.

Complaint Outcomes

After an investigation, findings are determined based on the evidence gathered:

- **Unfounded** – the acts alleged in the complaint did not occur.
- **Exonerated** – the acts alleged in the complaint occurred but were justified, lawful, and proper.
- **Not Sustained** – there is not sufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegations.
- **Sustained** – there is a preponderance of evidence in support of the allegations made in the complaint.
- **Complete** – The investigation established the facts of an Administrative Inquiry and determined that no violations of the rules occurred.

What can you do if you believe discrimination or misconduct has occurred?

You can submit a complaint about the DPD in the following ways:

- **Online:** Submit at dal.city/OCPO
- **In Person:** Visit us at Dallas City Hall or any DPD locations.
- **Email:** Send to OCPO@dallas.gov
- **Mail:** Dallas City Hall, 1500 Marilla St., 5DN, Dallas, TX 75201

Complaint forms are available in English and Spanish at Dallas Public Libraries, Recreation Centers, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) offices.

How long does it take to complete a full investigation?

Every case is different. Sometimes, an investigation can be done quickly, in a matter of a few months. Some investigations take longer. It depends on many things, such as the availability of witnesses and the complexity of the incident, including the number of alleged victims and subject officers.

Does the OCPO discipline officers?

No. the Chief of Police determines disciplinary actions for misconduct. Penalties range from verbal warnings to termination. If OCPO disagrees with the disciplinary action, it can recommend further action to the City Manager.

Do complaints remain on an officer’s record?

Yes. Regardless of the outcome, all complaints remain on an officer’s history, which is part of their personnel record at the police department. This includes complaints that are resolved through our mediation program.

Can the OCPO help me with a summons or arrest?

No, we do not have the jurisdiction. A summons or an arrest can only be resolved in court. We cannot provide any legal advice or assistance. You should seek guidance from a licensed attorney.

Why is filing a complaint beneficial for the community?

By filing a complaint, you help to improve DPD policies and practices. Your case can highlight areas for reform and accountability, contributing to a safer, more transparent community.

Additional information about the OCPO, including information about filing a charge of discrimination or misconduct, is available at dal.city/OCPO.