



## **When you file a complaint of police misconduct**

The purpose of the internal investigations process of the Wapato Police Department is to investigate and adjudicate in a fair, thorough, objective, competent, and timely manner each complaint alleging misconduct of an employee.

Any person who files a complaint can and should expect the following process:

### **I. Taking of the initial complaint**

A supervisor of the division that is the source of the complaint will collect as much detailed information from you as possible. This would include but is not necessarily limited to: date, time, place, circumstances, and witnesses. This information will be recorded on the official personnel complaint form. In addition, because we take these complaints so seriously, we will routinely ask at some point that all complainants provide a signed statement.

### **II. Screening and investigative assignment**

Once the initial complaint is received, a decision will be made as to whom or what unit will investigate the complaint.

- A. If the complaint is primarily criminal in nature, usually a detective will be assigned to investigate it with the cooperation of the Prosecutor's Office.
- B. If the complaint involves serious breaches of policies/procedures or rules/regulations--for example, excessive force or unlawful search—the investigator from the Professional Standards Office will be assigned to the investigation.
- C. If the complaint involves breaches of other policies/procedures or rules/regulations--for example, rudeness or failure to take appropriate action—the complaint will usually be investigated by the employee's supervisor.

### **III. Investigation of Complaints**

Regardless of who investigated the complaint, there will be a detailed and thorough examination of the facts. This will include all available evidence related to the complaint; for example, employees' statements, witnesses' statements, public records, and physical evidence. It is the investigator's absolute responsibility to pursue every proper means to develop sufficient information to support an appropriate and fair finding and disposition of the matter.

IV. **Review and Adjudication**

Once the fact-finding investigation is completed, the case is forwarded to the Chief of Police for review for completeness.

The case is usually sent through one of two review and recommendation processes. If the case was investigated by the employee's shift or unit, then the recommendation of finding and discipline will come through the employee's line of supervisors.

If the case was investigated by the investigator from the Professional Standards Office, they will make a recommendation of finding and discipline (if appropriate) to the Chief.

If the case is investigated as a crime, it would be the prosecutor who reviews the case and makes a decision to file charges.

V. **Notification**

After deliberation, the Chief of Police, or designee, will issue a written finding of fact and proposed disposition. You will receive notification by mail.

VI. **Timeframe**

Because of the time often required to thoroughly investigate and adjudicate these matters, it is not unusual for the process to take seventy-five (75) working days. You may call the investigator to check on the status of your complaint.

If you have any questions concerning your complaint or the process, please feel free to contact the Office of the Chief of Police between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 877-4275

