

City of San José, California

COUNCIL POLICY

TITLE CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROCEDURES	PAGE 1 of 2	POLICY NUMBER 0-18
EFFECTIVE DATE May 25, 1982	REVISED DATE	
APPROVED BY COUNCIL ACTION		5/25/82 (Council Referral #5-25-82-11i)

BACKGROUND

On October 28, 1980, the City Council approved the following objectives for the Citizen Complaint Task Force (Council Referral #10-28-80-11b):

1. To develop working definitions of complaints, inquiries, services requests and other categories of citizen inquiries.
2. To identify City organizations which have operational formal recording procedures regarding complaints.
3. To analyze present complaint procedures and attempt to define City-wide standards.
4. To recommend specific methods for implementing such standards within existing resources.

The following guidelines for responding to citizen complaints are a result of these task force objectives.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish standard City-wide guidelines for responding to citizen complaints.

POLICY

Because the types of complaints received throughout the City vary widely, the manner in which the guidelines for responding to the complaints are incorporated into departmental response procedures will also vary. As a result, specification as well as implementation of these guidelines will be the responsibility of each department. Each department will also be responsible for designating an initial contact person to receive complaints and referrals from other departments.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures are to be used as a standard guideline for responding to citizen complaints:

1. **Screening and Referring Complaints** - The general nature of the complaint shall be obtained and reviewed. If the complaint is inappropriate for the department screening the complaint, the complainant shall be referred to the appropriate department. The complainant should be given the name of the department, division, and contact person whenever possible before the call is transferred.
2. **Receiving and Recording Complaints** - Information to be obtained and recorded shall include but not be limited to:
 - a. The complainant's name, address, and phone number.
 - b. A statement of the problem or allegation.
 - c. The location and date of where and when the problem or alleged incident occurred.
 - d. The names of the employees involved if necessary or available.
 - e. Witnesses' names, addresses, and phone numbers if necessary or available.

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- f. The date the complaint was received.
 - g. The name of the person receiving the complaint.
3. **Assigning and Logging Complaints** - The complaint shall be given a control number and due date before being assigned. The due date shall be in accordance with priorities established by the department. The priorities shall heed to the safety, health, and welfare of the public. The complaint shall be logged as necessary, and the log shall include but not be limited to the following:
- a. The complaint control number.
 - b. The name of the complainant.
 - c. The subject of the complaint.
 - d. The staff member or unit assigned to respond.
 - e. The date the complaint was received.
 - f. The date the complaint was assigned.
 - g. The date the complaint is to be resolved.
 - h. The date the complaint was resolved.
4. **Responding and Recording** - Staff shall respond to complaints in the manner deemed appropriate by the department. The findings and response shall be recorded as necessary for each department. Departmental systems for recording shall be established where the volume of complaints received by each department requires such a system. The recording or report shall include but not be limited to the complaint control number, a summary of the complaint, the staff findings, the action taken, and the date the complaint was resolved. The complainant shall be informed of the results, and in the event that the complaint cannot be resolved within five working days, the complainant shall be given an interim response within that time, i.e., the complainant should be contacted and notified of the action taken or to be taken as well as the department responsible for such action if the complaint is not resolved within five working days.
5. **Reporting** - The complaints shall be compiled and summarized for review as determined by the department director.