



Citizen Complaints

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Approved By: Teddy Booth	Title: Fire Chief Taylors Bridge Fire Dept	Date: 07/01/2005



1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. To outline how to handle complaints from citizens.

2.0 Complaints

- 2.1. Complaints are important to the Taylors Bridge Fire Department, primarily because they may indicate that the desired level of service to the community is not being performed. However, complaints may stem from varying circumstances.
- 2.2. Whether complaints come in by telephone, in person or by letter, they should all be handled the same way. Some complaints may be unreasonable and request services, which the fire department does not provide.
- 2.3. You, as a member of the fire department, are called upon to handle complaints: the manner in which you handle them may have far reaching consequences. If a complaint is ignored, an already bad situation may grow worse, but if it is handled promptly and efficiently services to citizens are improved and the Towns public relations are also improved.
- 2.4. It is important that you remember that a person making a complaint may be making his first contact with the staff of the fire department and impression he gets from his talk with you will greatly affect his impression and opinion of the entire Taylors Bridge Fire Department.
- 2.5. When a citizen makes a complaint, remember that his problem is a real and important one to him. Regardless of what YOU may think of it. You must treat the matter with his in mind.
- 2.6. When handling complaints, be polite and firm: never become angry nor argue with the complainant, even if HE is unreasonable, angry and insulting toward you and the department. Do not take his comments personally, always say "We" instead of "I".

3.0 Handling Complaints

- 3.1. Let the person talk himself out. After a complainant says what is on his mind, he may calm down and listen to what you have to say.



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- 3.2. In your friendliest manner, tell the complainant that you are sorry that he has not received the service he needs. Don't try to excuse or justify your actions or those of the department.
- 3.3. Offer to do what you can to solve the callers problem. If he wants to see the "top man", let him. This is no reflection on your own ability and may go far in calming him down.
- 3.4. Assure the person of the goodwill of the Taylors Bridge Fire Department and when the talk has ended, thank him for calling.
- 3.5. Handling complaints is one of the most difficult jobs any member will ever have. No two complaints are exactly alike and no two citizens are exactly alike. It is your job to courteously resolve the problem promptly and efficiently following the established practices of the department. It is not always possible to give the "one" answer the complainant wants to hear but do your best to explain the situation and that the fire department wants to provide the best service possible under the conditions that exist.
- 3.6. It is recommended to listen to the individual, and take to your superior officer. The officer should be the one to answer any complaints by the community.
- 3.7. At any level of complaint, simple or otherwise, it is the responsibility of the fire department member to notify the fire chief of the complaint, answer given by the member and the result.