


Billerica Police Department 	POLICY NUMBER ADM-1	PAGES 13	EFFECTIVE 01/27/2025
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Internal Affairs			

I. General Considerations and Guidelines

A relationship of trust between the employees of this Department and the citizens of the community is essential. As such, all employees are expected to conduct themselves in such a manner as to reflect favorably upon themselves and the department.

To a large degree, the public image of this department is determined by how well it responds to allegations of misconduct against the department or its employees. To that end, the objectives of an Internal Affairs investigation are:

- Protection of the public;
- Protection of the employee;
- Protection of the department;
- Removal of unfit personnel; and
- Correction of procedural training problems.

All alleged or suspected violations of laws, ordinances, by-laws, department rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and orders (verbal or written) must be investigated according to the procedures outlined for each.

II. Policy

It is the policy of this department to:

- A. Investigate all complaints, including anonymous complaints, against the department or a member of the department, regardless of the source of such complaints, through a regulated, fair, and impartial Internal Affairs Program;
- B. Determine whether or not such complaints are valid; and
- C. Take appropriate action.

III. Procedures

A. Complaint/Commendation Procedures

1. Public Notice

- a. The procedure for filing a complaint/commendation against an employee or the agency is available to the public and is posted:
 - 1) On the department web site; and
 - 2) In the lobby of the police facility.
- b. Any employee asked by a member of the public about the procedure to file a complaint should be advised of the procedure by that employee.

2. Complaint Report FORM

- a. A standard statement report form should be used to record all complaints of misconduct, mistreatment, or unethical practices against Police personnel, whether registered by a citizen, initiated from within the Police Department, or forwarded by another governmental agency.
- b. The following information shall be included on the complaint report form when available:
 - 1) Date and time of complaint report;
 - 2) Name, address, and telephone number of the complainant;
 - 3) Name (or description) of the employee against whom the complaint is made;
 - 4) Date, time and location of the reported incident;
 - 5) Complainant's description of the incident which resulted in the complaint;
 - 6) Signature of complainant; if complainant refuses to sign, note refusal on the statement form;
 - 7) Signature of parent or guardian if complainant is under eighteen years of age; if parent or guardian refuses to sign, note such on the statement form;
 - 8) Name and signature of supervisor receiving complaint report; and
 - 9) A statement that the complainant will receive a response from the department within sixty (60) days regarding the status or conclusion of the investigation.

B. Receiving and Recording Complaints

1. General Procedures

- a. This department shall maintain a record of all complaints against the agency or its employees.

- b. The shift supervisor at the time the complaint is made shall be responsible for receiving and making a complete recording of any complaint of police employee misconduct made by a citizen in person or received by telephone.
- c. This initial contact between a complaining citizen and police authorities is a most important stage in the complaint process, as the complainant is often tense, angry, and emotionally upset, and the potential for hostility is great.
- d. Courtesy and cooperation should be extended to all citizens registering complaints or otherwise inquiring about complaint procedure.
- e. No person shall be denied an opportunity to register a complaint, nor shall any such person be directed to return or call back later.

2. In-Person Complaints

- a. Citizens making complaints in person shall be requested to read over their completed reports, to make any necessary corrections or additions and to sign their complaints.
- b. If a complainant refuses to sign a complaint, a notation to that effect shall be made on the statement form.

3. Telephone Complaints

- a. Citizens making complaints by telephone shall be informed that their signed complaint is requested; however, no telephone complaint shall be refused or rejected because the complainant does not wish to sign a statement form or because [s]he does not wish to be identified.
- b. The supervisor taking the complaint shall incorporate it into a statement form.

4. Complaints Received by Mail/Electronic Mail/Internet

- a. If a complaint of misconduct or mistreatment by a department employee is received by mail, e-mail or the internet, the allegations shall be incorporated into a statement form and the original communication attached thereto.
 - b. If the information so received is insufficient or incomplete, the complainant shall be contacted, if possible, and informed of the department complaint procedure and any necessary additional information obtained.
5. Departmental Complaints: Formal departmental complaints of misconduct against a department employee shall be initiated by the preparation of a statement form.
6. Complaints by Detainees: Any detainee who alleges misconduct or mistreatment by a department employee shall be advised by the shift supervisor of his/her right to submit a statement form, and such complaints

shall be investigated and processed in the same manner as other citizen complaints.

7. Complaints from Governmental Agencies: When information is received or obtained from other governmental agencies alleging specific acts of misconduct against a department employee, this information shall be recorded on a statement form and an investigation initiated in the usual manner.
8. Street Complaints: If an officer on the street is approached by a citizen regarding a complaint of alleged misconduct against an employee of the Police Department, the officer shall inform such person that his/her complaint should be directed to the shift supervisor.
9. Verification of Receipt
 - a. Every person making a complaint against a department employee shall receive a copy of his/her complaint to serve as a receipt verifying that such complaint has been received and is being processed.
 - b. When a complaint is made in person, the supervisor receiving the complaint will ensure that the complainant receives a copy of his/her complaint to serve as a written verification that the complaint has been received.

C. Immediate Action

1. Immediate Resolution
 - a. In some cases, the resolution of a complaint may be accomplished by the shift supervisor if the incident is clearly not of a serious nature, or arises from a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge of the law or of the limitation of a police officer's authority.
 - b. Under no circumstances, however, will a justifiable complaint be refused, delayed, or otherwise rejected in this manner.
 - c. The supervisor addressing the complaint shall report the facts of the incident and subsequent resolution to the Chief of Police or Deputy Chief in writing or by e-mail. The resolution may also be acknowledged in writing by the complainant.
2. Referral to Internal Affairs Supervisor: If the substance of the employee misconduct warrants it, the OIC may immediately notify the Internal Affairs Supervisor, who will determine if an investigation should be immediately undertaken.
3. Notification of Chief: The Chief will be notified of any complaints against the agency or its employees by the OIC taking the complaint by email before leaving for the day. If the substance of a complaint, if proven, would be of a

grave nature or is an accusation of a serious crime, the Chief shall be notified forthwith by the OIC by both phone and email.

4. Relieved Employee From Duty

- a. A supervisor may place an employee sworn and non-sworn on immediate administrative leave for the remainder of his/her shift, pending notification of the Internal Affairs section or the Chief of Police. Such action may be taken when a complaint is of a serious nature and, in the opinion of the supervisor, may be credible, or when the supervisor believes that such action is in the best interest of the department, such as:
 - 1) Insubordination;
 - 2) Fitness for duty; or
 - 3) Criminal Activity.
- b. The employee shall only be relieved from duty otherwise at the direction of the Chief of Police, in accordance with statutory and collective bargaining provisions.

5. POST notification: The agency shall within two business days of the receipt of a complaint alleging the misconduct of an officer from a member of the public, from personnel at the agency, or from any other source, for all complaints that are not a minor matter as defined by POST, transmit a description of the written complaint and a copy of any written complaint to the division of standards. Copies of minor matters not transmitted to POST need to be available to the commission upon request.

D. *Investigation of Complaints*

1. OIC of Internal Affairs Investigations

- a. The Deputy Chief of Police is assigned by the Chief of Police as the OIC of Internal Affairs investigations and shall be responsible for supervising Internal Affairs investigations. In the event the Deputy Chief is the subject of the Internal Investigation, the Chief of Police shall be responsible for overseeing the investigation.
- b. The Deputy Chief of Police has the authority to report directly to the Chief of Police.

2. Categories of Complaints

a. Complaints Investigated by Supervisor

- 1) Criteria for the assignment of an investigation to a shift supervisor or OIC of the station may include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Alleged rudeness;
 - b) Tardiness; and
 - c) Minor cases of insubordination.

- 2) Reports of investigations performed by shift supervisors shall be forwarded and reviewed by the Deputy Chief of Police.
- b. Complaints subject to an Internal Affairs Investigation: The criteria for determining the categories of complaints to be investigated by Internal Affairs include, but are not limited to, allegations of:
 - a) Corruption;
 - b) Brutality;
 - c) Misuse of force;
 - d) Breach of civil rights;
 - e) Criminal misconduct; and
 - f) Any other matter as directed by the Chief.

E. Internal Affairs Investigations

1. Notification of Employee

- a. The affected employee shall be provided a written statement of the allegations against him/her, unless the Chief determines that disclosure might jeopardize an investigation and then notice will be made as soon as the investigation allows.
- b. When an employee is notified that [s]he has become the subject of an internal affairs investigation, the Deputy Chief shall issue the employee:
 - 1) A written statement of the allegations; and
 - 2) The employee's rights and responsibilities relative to the investigation.
- c. If the employee was not notified by order of the Chief, [s]he must receive written notification prior to any interrogation, being directed to submit a report regarding the complaint, or an administrative or criminal hearing.
- d. The written statement of the allegations to the employee will include the employee being advised of his/her rights and responsibilities relative to the investigation.

2. Status Reports

- a. The OIC of Internal Affairs investigations shall be responsible for providing the Chief of Police with status reports on the progress of the investigation.
- b. In all cases of reporting, except anonymous reports, the complaining party shall periodically receive information regarding the status of the investigation. Notification should be made;
 - 1) Upon an investigator's being assigned or change of investigator;
 - 2) Every thirty days if extended; and
 - 3) Upon the Chief's request or completion of the investigation. See Duties of Chief in this policy.

- 4) No employee personnel information will be released to the public through this process unless directed by law.
3. Time Limits of Investigation: Per Section 1 of MGL Chapter 6E of section 10, (h) An appointing agency shall complete an internal affairs investigation into officer misconduct and issue a final disposition within one year of receiving a complaint or notice from the POST Commission of the complaint being filed. The POST Commission may, upon a showing of good cause, extend the time to complete the investigation.
4. Off-Duty Conduct: An internal administrative investigation may inquire into a department employee's on-duty or off-duty conduct if such inquiry is reasonably and directly related to the employee's performance of duty, if such conduct affects the employee's fitness or ability to continue in the police service, or reflects discredit on the department.
5. Criminal Wrongdoing
 - a. If it is determined, generally after a preliminary investigation, that allegations against a department employee could result in a criminal prosecution, the accused employee must be granted all applicable constitutional and statutory rights.
 - b. Prior to being questioned regarding alleged personal involvement in criminal activity, a department employee shall be given the Miranda warnings, including the right to have an attorney present during any such questioning, prior to custodial interrogation.
 - c. After Miranda warnings have been given, any voluntary statement made thereafter could be admissible in a criminal proceeding.
 - d. An employee may be compelled to answer questions narrowly drawn and related to his/her on- or off-duty conduct, and may be disciplined (including discharge) for failure to answer truthfully.
6. Departmental Disciplinary Action
 - a. If it is determined as a result of a preliminary investigation that allegations made against a department employee could result in departmental disciplinary action, the accused employee is entitled to a fair and objective investigation and resolution of the charges made.
 - b. Employees Compelled to Answer Questions
 - 1) All department employees, when requested by the Chief, or by a superior officer designated by the Chief, must respond fully and truthfully to all questions regarding their performance of official duties or their off-duty misconduct which affects their fitness or ability to remain in the police service.
 - 2) Any failure to answer completely and truthfully to such inquires may be punished by appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal from the department.ⁱ

- 3) The official conducting the interrogation must, at the time of the interrogation, specify if the employee or his/her counsel or representative asks, the precise repercussions (i.e., suspension, discharge, or the exact form of discipline) that will result if the employee fails to respond.ⁱⁱ
- 4) When a department employee, after declining to do so voluntarily, is ordered to submit a report or to answer questions under a threat of the penalty of discipline, that employee must receive transactional immunity from criminal prosecution for any offenses to which the compelled testimony relates.
 - a) The Supreme Judicial Court has held that Article 12 of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights requires "transactional" immunity to supplant the privilege against self-incrimination when a public employee is being compelled to answer questions concerning possible criminal activities connected with his employment. Transactional immunity grants "immunity from prosecution for offenses to which compelled testimony relates."ⁱⁱⁱ
 - b) If the questions specifically, directly, and narrowly relate to the employee's performance of official duties or his/her off-duty conduct which affects his/her fitness or ability to remain in the police service, and if such employee is informed that [s]he will receive transactional immunity from criminal prosecution, [s]he must answer or face disciplinary action, including dismissal from the department, for refusing to answer such questions.
 - c) The Chief shall secure a written grant of transactional immunity from the Attorney General's Office and District Attorney's office. An employee may decline to answer questions in a criminal investigation until such documentation is received.

7. Union Representation

- a. In conducting internal administrative investigations, there is no legal obligation for the Department to provide department employees with an opportunity to consult with a personal attorney before being questioned on work-related matters;^{iv} however, a request for an attorney or an employee representative to be present will be granted if the investigation is not thereby unduly delayed.
- b. Except in unusual situations, any interview or questioning should take place during the employee's regular duty hours.
- c. Any interview or questioning should not be prolonged without reasonable rest periods and the opportunity for meals and such other personal necessities as are reasonably required.
- d. A department employee shall not be improperly harassed or threatened during this period of questioning.

8. *Double Jeopardy: No double jeopardy exists when a department employee is found not guilty in court of criminal charges and is then found in violation of departmental charges after a disciplinary hearing, as the department charges are administrative in nature and can be sustained by a "preponderance of the evidence" rather than the criminal court standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt."*
9. *Investigative Techniques*
 - a. Generally
 - 1) In conducting investigations of alleged employee misconduct, all appropriate investigative techniques and methods should be employed, consistent with legal requirements and all necessary concern for the individual rights of the accused employee.
 - 2) An internal administrative investigation should be conducted with the same degree of professional competence as is devoted to a criminal investigation.
 - b. Medical or Laboratory Examinations
 - 1) Upon orders of the Chief of Police or his/her designee, an employee may be required to submit to a medical or laboratory examination, at the department's expense.
 - 2) Drug or Alcohol Testing: Police employees may be compelled to submit to alcohol testing in connection with an administrative investigation based upon reasonable suspicion.^v Consistent with employee CBA.
 - c. Identification
 - 1) A Department employee may be required to be photographed.
 - 2) A Department employee may be compelled to stand in a lineup for identification in connection with an administrative investigation. Such a lineup should be fairly constructed and not be unfairly suggestive and should not be used for an administrative investigation where criminal charges are contemplated.
 - 3) A Department Employee may be compelled to be audio or video recorded.
 - 4) A refusal can be the basis for an additional disciplinary charge of refusal to obey a lawful order.
 - d. Searches
 - 1) A police employees personal property, including his/her home, car, telephone electronic data and other property, is protected from unreasonable search and seizure under the Massachusetts Constitution, and it is possible that any evidence illegally obtained may not be used as evidence in an administrative proceeding.^{vi}

- 2) Department property furnished to the employee, such as desks, lockers, or vehicles, in which it is clearly understood in advance that an employee has "no expectation of privacy," may be searched without a warrant.
- e. Financial Disclosure; A employee may be compelled to submit a financial disclosure statement as part of an internal affairs investigation provided such statement is material to the investigation being conducted.^{vii} An employee may not be required to disclose the financial records of others.
- f. Polygraph: Under the provisions of MGL c.149, s.19B, police officers may be required to submit to a polygraph in connection with an internal administrative investigation if such test is conducted by a law enforcement agency in the course of a departmental investigation of criminal activity, and under such circumstances, officers may face disciplinary action for refusal.^{viii} If requested by the Officer, applicable grants of immunity shall be provided.

F. *Withdrawn Complaints*

1. If during the progress of an internal investigation, the complainant indicates a desire to withdraw the complaint, every effort should be made to ensure that this decision is made voluntarily, and a signed statement to this effect should be obtained from the complainant.
2. Even though a complaint is withdrawn, a full report of the investigation to date should be prepared for the Chief, and his/her approval obtained for the termination or continuation of the investigation.
3. Any attempt, directly or indirectly, on the part of a department employee to obstruct any internal investigation or to threaten or persuade any complainant to withdraw or abandon his/her complaint is prohibited and will be treated most severely.

G. Report of Investigation

1. Report: At the conclusion of any administrative investigation, a full written report shall be prepared for submission to the Chief, which shall include the following:
 - a. The original complaint report;
 - b. Any additional statements taken from the complainant or statements obtained from witnesses;
 - c. Any statements made or reports submitted by the department employee under investigation;
 - d. A summary of all evidence gathered;
 - e. Any mitigating circumstances; and

- f. An evaluation of the complaint, a conclusion of facts, and a definitive statement as to whether the charges made by the complainant were:
 - 1) Sustained: The complaint was valid and supported by sufficient evidence;
 - 2) Not sustained: There was inadequate or insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the complaint;
 - 3) Unfounded: The allegations were baseless and without foundation; or
 - 4) Exonerated: The complaint was unjustified or unwarranted, as the actions of the accused department employee were in compliance with the law or in accordance with department policy and procedure.
2. Duties of Chief/ Deputy Chief
 - a. Upon receipt of the report of an investigation, the Chief should take further action as is necessary based upon findings in the particular case.
 - b. The subject of the investigation shall be promptly notified of the final results of the investigation. No employee personnel information shall be released to the public. If the department employee is cleared of the charges made, [s]he shall be officially exonerated in writing.
 - c. The complainant shall be notified promptly as to the final results of the investigation, personally if possible, or otherwise by mail.
 - d. If a disciplinary hearing is deemed necessary, the complainant shall be notified that his/her testimony will be required at that time.
 - e. The Chief shall immediately notify POST:
 - 1) Upon completion of the investigation, transmit an investigation report signed by the investigator to the division of standards at POST, in a form to be prescribed by the division of standards.
 - 2) Upon determining the final disposition of the complaint and final discipline to be imposed by the agency, if any, shall transmit a final report to the division of standards at POST, in a form to be prescribed by the division of standards.
 - 3) If an officer resigns prior to the conclusion of an internal investigation by the agency or prior to the imposition of agency discipline, shall transmit a report to the division of standards at POST, in a form to be prescribed by the division of standards.
3. *Confidentiality of Internal Affairs*
 - a. In order to ensure that the individual rights of employees who are the subject of an Internal Affairs investigation are protected, all materials relevant to that investigation shall be kept strictly confidential and secured by the OIC of Internal Affairs, at least to the extent legally allowed. All

Internal Affairs files will be stored digitally in PowerIA. All paper materials not uploaded into PowerIA shall be secured in the Deputy Chief's Office in a locked cabinet.

- b. The public records exception no longer applies to officers' disciplinary records related to a misconduct investigation.
- c. All materials need to be available to the POST Commission's Division of Police Standards to audit all records related to complaints, investigations and investigative reports, and personnel records pursuant to the rules and regulations to be promulgated by the POST.
- d. Internal Affairs investigators should note in their reports any instances where witnesses refused or were reluctant to speak with them unless they were assured that their statements would be kept confidential, at least to the extent legally allowed.
- e. No statement regarding an Internal Affairs investigation will be made or issued to the public or media unless the charges have been sustained and action has been taken or initiated against the employee. No employee personnel information will be released to the public, at least to the extent legally allowed.

H. *Liaison with District Attorney*

- 1. Any Internal Affairs investigation which may, or does, result in criminal charges being brought against an employee shall require the District Attorney's or Attorney General's office to be apprised of the case for the purpose of advising on legal issues and ultimate prosecution, if necessary.
- 2. Contact shall be made through the OIC of Internal Affairs.

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- ⁱ *Carney v. Springfield*, 403 Mass. 604, 532 N.E.2d 631 (1988).
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^{iv} *NLRB v. Weingarten*, 420 U.S. 251, 95 S.Ct. 959 (1975).
^v *Johnson v. Dept. of Police*, 615 So.2d 1064 (La. App. 1993)
^{vi} *Board of Selectmen of Framingham v. Municipal Ct. of City of Boston*, 373 Mass. 783, 369 N.E.2d 1145 (1977).
^{vii} *O'Brien v. Mun. Court*, 10 Mass. App. Ct. 851, 407 N.E.2d 1297 (1980).
^{viii} M.G.L. c. 149, §19B.