



## MASON COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT #4

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TITLE: COMPLAINT PROCEDURES, EXTERNAL

CHAPTER: 2000 NUMBER: 2055 APPROVED: 10-07-2008

APPROVED: Signature on file Bob Burbridge, Chief

### SCOPE

All district personnel

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a means where all members will respond to the public and other district representatives in a courteous, caring, and appropriate manner. Mason Co. Fire District #4 will respond promptly, courteously, and positively to all citizen(s) and/or district representatives' complaints regarding its officers, members and/or services. It is understood not all complaints will require the use of this form; it is intended for those complaints that cannot be quickly and easily resolved at the time of receiving the complaint. The nature of complaints requiring follow-up, investigation, other divisions, significant time to resolve, or potential breaking of the law, would require the use of this complaint form.

### POLICY

It is the policy of Mason Co. Fire District 4 to encourage resolution of complaints quickly and efficiently, and within their area of responsibility. Complaints that cannot be quickly and easily resolved should be directed to the appropriate person for resolution and/or follow-up.

### PROCEDURE

If a complaint about any aspect, operation, or policy of Mason Co. Fire District #4 cannot be quickly and easily resolved by the person receiving the complaint, it shall be referred to the Assistant Chief.

Once a complaint has been initiated, District personnel shall initiate a Complaint Form. This form will be filled out as completely as possible and forwarded to the Assistant Chief.



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### **Complaint Guidelines;**

If possible, all complaints shall be resolved at the lowest level. If the member receiving the complaint is unable to resolve the issue, then the complaint shall be routed to the Assistant Chief.

Every effort should be made to diffuse the situation if the complainant is upset or angry. The complainant shall be informed of the process Fire District 4 will follow concerning a complaint. The District will attempt to bring resolution in a timely fashion. The District will contact the complainant, unless otherwise requested, and follow-up on the customers concern as soon as possible.

If possible, review the complaint form with the customer to assure accuracy. If the complaint occurs in the field, the person receiving the complaint shall document the necessary information and complete a complaint form upon returning to the station or office.

All information received throughout the complaint process shall remain confidential.

Complaints regarding a district officer will be routed to the next higher chain of command through to the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. (Assistant Chief, Chief, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners)

If a Commissioner receives a complaint from a citizen, member, or agency, he/she will report it to the Assistant Chief as soon as possible, but no later than 2 days from the time of complaint.

If it were deemed necessary for a Commissioner to conduct an investigation, as per direction by the Board of Commissioners, the substance of the complaint would be addressed within Executive Session.

### **Complaint Form Guidelines;**

Concerns requiring authoritative action, follow-up investigation, other divisions significant time to resolve, and potential breaking of the law, shall be documented on the Customer Complaint Form.

If a complaint alleges serious misconduct, the Chief will be *notified immediately*.

Forms are to be kept at each station and may be used by any member of the District.

Forms for those concerns requiring authoritative action or follow-up shall be routed to the appropriate level by normal chain of command procedures. (as per above)



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Closed out complaints will be forwarded to the Assistant Chief for review. All associated documentation or materials shall be included.

Customer Complaint Forms shall be recorded on the Customer Complaint Tracking Log. The Assistant Chief or his/her designee, to keep a concise record of all complaints for that division, shall maintain the log at Station-41.

The Log shall indicate the respective information from the Customer Complaint Form to include the following items.

### Investigation/Disposition

Each complaint received by the District will be thoroughly investigated. Each complaint should be regarded as an opportunity to examine our customer services at the point of contact.

The Assistant Chief should conduct investigation

Upon contacting the complainant (unless no contact has been requested):  
Inform the person of your relationship to the individual\crew\division the complaint was filed against.

Restate the complaint, as you understand it.  
Ask if your understanding of the complaint is accurate.  
Reconcile any discrepancies.  
Ask complainant if they wish to be contacted once the investigation is complete.

Upon contacting the individual\crew\division the complaint was lodged against:  
Discuss the incident generating the complaint.  
Ask if anything unusual occurred.  
Describe the incident as related by the complainant.  
Discuss any discrepancies.

After careful consideration of the available information, the investigation should make one of the following dispositions and enter the choice in the space provided on side two of the Customer Complaint Form.

UNFOUNDED	Alleged act did not occur.
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EXONERATED	The act occurred but was justified, lawful, and proper.
NOT SUSTAINED	Unable to prove or disprove allegation due to insufficient evidence.
SUSTAINED	All or part of the act occurred as alleged based upon the existence of evidence.
RESOLVED	A satisfactory conclusion was reached concerning the complaint issue.
UNRESOLVED	Unable to reach a satisfactory conclusion concerning the complaint issue(s).

The Investigator conducting the investigation must impartially collect information and evidence from both sides of the issue. Any investigation undertaken will be held in strictest confidence. No individual will contact anyone or discuss the issue with someone who is not directly involved in the complaint.

### **Follow Up**

After the investigation has determined the appropriate finding, the Assistant Chief or person performing the investigation should inform the person(s) named in the complaint with the intent of dissemination of the finding and any pertinent information. Corrective action, if required, will be discussed at this time.

Complaints ending in determinations of “Not Sustained” or “Exonerated” should be examined from a customer service point of view, allowing the avoidance of similar future encounters leading to unhappy customers.

If the complainant requested follow-up, the investigator should thank them for sharing their concerns with the District and advise them the complaint was investigated and proper action was taken.

All complaints will be thoroughly and objectively reviewed in an effort to ensure fair resolution to the complainant.

All complaints shall be filed to document the resolution process.