

EDDY COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS POLICY MANUAL

112 Citizen Complaints

PURPOSE

It is the policy of the Eddy County Volunteer Fire Department that all members will respond to the public in a courteous, caring and appropriate manner. Eddy County Volunteer Fire Departments will respond promptly, courteously, and positively to all citizen concerns or complaints regarding its members and/or services.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Citizen complaints may refer to the conduct or performance of specific individuals or may relate to the level of performance or non-performance of service delivery functions. Management and supervisory personnel will attempt to service and resolve complaints at the lowest level.

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION

Each written complaint, which does not allege criminal activity, received by the department will be thoroughly investigated by the appropriate personnel. Regardless of severity, each complaint should be regarded as an opportunity to examine our customer service at the point of contact. Any complaint that alleges criminal activity will be referred to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

After thoroughly reviewing the complaint, the investigator should contact the complainant (unless no contact has been requested). Upon contact, the following steps should be taken:

- Inform the complainant of your relationship to the individual/crew that complaint is against.
- Restate the complaint as you understand it.
- Ask if your understanding of the complaint is accurate.
- Reconcile any discrepancies.
- Ask complainant if they would like you to contact them when the investigation is complete.
- Interview the individual/crew that the complaint was lodge against.
- Discuss the call/incident that generated the complaint.

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- Ask if anything unusual occurred.
- Describe the incident as related by the complaint.
- Discuss any discrepancies.

FOLLOW-UP

After the investigator has determined the appropriate “finding,” a meeting should be held with the crew/individual named in the complaint. The purpose of the meeting is to inform of the finding and discuss any pertinent information. If corrective action is required, it will be outlined at this time. These incidents should be thoroughly examined from a customer service point of view. The focus of discussion concerning these incidents should be on how future encounters of a similar nature might be handled to avoid creating unhappy customers.

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

COUNTY COMMISSION LIAISON AND FOLLOW-UP

Written documentation regarding the complaint, investigation, and follow-up shall be submitted to the Eddy County Fire Marshal.

The Fire Marshal will act as liaison to the County Commission and/or County Manager in responding to inquiries regarding citizen complaints.