

# Delaware County Emergency Medical Service Standard Operating Guidelines

Subject	Effective	Supersedes	This Sheet	Total
Citizen Complaints	August 1, 2007	All	1	3

All employees will respond to the public in a courteous, caring and appropriate manner. All citizen concerns and/or complaints regarding Department employees and/or services will be addressed in a prompt, courteous, and positive manner.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Citizen complaints and/or concerns range from individual performance or non-performance to the overall level of service delivery provided. Management and supervisory personnel will attempt to service and resolve complaints at the lowest appropriate level in the Department. When necessary, however, the Delaware County Human Resources Department will be used as a resource.

All complaints, including those from citizens wishing to remain anonymous, will be documented on a Complaint Record Form. The form will be filled out as completely as possible. The completed form will be forwarded to the Chief where it will be assigned back to the appropriate Captain for investigation. All completed complaints will be returned to the Chief. Advise those filing complaints that if filed as anonymous, the outcome of the investigation will be used in a "lessons learned" manner, and regardless of outcome, will be non-punitive. If the complainant wishes for a more thorough investigation to be conducted, an anonymous complaint is less beneficial to the investigative team.

## COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY DCEMS ADMINISTRATION

Citizen complaints received by staff in the DCEMS Administration Offices will be directed to the Chief. A Complaint Record Form will be initiated and the complaint assigned to the appropriate Captain for investigation. *All complaints alleging serious administrative or criminal misconduct will be assigned to the Assistant Chief for investigation.* In most cases, service delivery complaints will be assigned to the appropriate Captain for action.

## COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY DCEMS OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

Citizen complaints will be documented by the person receiving the complaint on a Complaint Record Form. If a complaint pertains to serious misconduct, the Chief will be notified immediately. The completed Complaint Record Form will be forwarded immediately to the Chief so it can be recorded and assigned to the appropriate person for investigation.

## INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS

Each complaint received by the Department will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. Regardless of severity, each complaint should be regarded as an opportunity to examine our customer service at the point of contact. Unless the complainant requests "no contact" the investigating officer should contact the complainant as soon as possible to inform the complainant that their concern is being addressed. Upon contact, the following steps should be performed:

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- Inform the complainant of your name and rank and how you relate to the area of concern.
- Restate the complaint as you understand it.
- Ask if your understanding of the complaint is correct.
- Reconcile any discrepancies.
- Ask complainant if they would like you to contact them when the investigation is complete.
- THANK THE COMPLAINANT FOR BRINGING THE CONCERNS TO YOUR ATTENTION.
- Interview the individual/crew that the complaint was lodged against, and document the results.
- When conducting investigations involving personnel from the rank of Lieutenant or below, advise each employee of their right to Union representation.
- Discuss the call/incident that generated the complaint.
- Ask if anything unusual occurred.
- Describe the incident as related by the complainant.
- Discuss any discrepancies.

## DISPOSITION

After considering all available information, the investigator will make one of the following determinations:

- ⊙ UNFOUNDED - The alleged act did not occur.
- ⊙ EXONERATED - The act occurred but was justified, lawful and proper.
- ⊙ NOT SUSTAINED - The investigation produced information insufficient to prove or disapprove the allegation.
- ⊙ SUSTAINED - All or part of the act occurred as alleged. (A finding of "SUSTAINED" must be based on the existence of substantial fact in support of reasonable proof.)

## DOCUMENTATION

The investigator will provide written documentation of his actions, stating the facts that include the statement/s of the individual/crew. In some cases the investigator will need to obtain written statement/s from the individual/crew, which will be attached to the Complaint Record Form.

## FOLLOW UP

After the investigator has determined the appropriate "finding," a meeting should be held with the crew/individual named in the complaint, along with the appropriate Union representative, if requested. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the finding and any pertinent information. If corrective action is required, it will be outlined at this time. Many complaints will fall in the "NOT SUSTAINED" and "EXONERATED" category. These incidents should be thoroughly examined from a customer service

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point of view. The focus of the discussion concerning these incidents should be on how future encounters of a similar nature might be handled to avoid creating unhappy customers.

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

THE COMPLETED COMPLAINT RECORD FORM AND ALL ATTACHMENTS WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF.

## FOLLOW-UP

The Chief will act as a liaison to the Board of Commissioners in responding to inquiries regarding citizen complaints, when appropriate.

Issuing Authority:



DCEMS Chief Rob Farmer

08/01/2007

Date