


<p>RABUN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE</p>  <p>General Order Number: 4.11</p>	<p>Date of Issue</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Effective Date</p> <p>2/23/2016</p>	<p>Revision Date</p>
<p>Subject: CITIZEN INFORMATION REQUESTS</p>	<p>Amends:</p>		<p>Rescinds:</p>
<p>Index as: Citizen Information Requests General Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>State Certification Standards: 2.7</p>		
<p>Special Instructions:</p>			

PURPOSE

The purpose of this General Order is to establish policy and procedures for the receipt and processing of inquiries about departmental policies or practices, information concerning employee actions deserving commendation, and allegations of employee misconduct.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

It shall be the policy of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office that all possible citizen requests for information be processed in a manner that reflects favorably on the Rabun County Sheriff's Office.

DISCUSSION

The primary goal of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office is to preserve peace and social order. To accomplish this, all efforts must be taken to build a strong, positive relationship between the department and the general public.

One of the best ways to build public trust is to establish procedures for the handling of citizen information about the department and its employees. The purpose for such procedures is to:

1. Recognize employees who are to be commended for their manner of public service;

2. Identify practices requiring corrective measures through remedial training or policy revision;
3. Clarify departmental policies, procedures, or programs;
4. Obtain suggestions on how to improve departmental services;
5. Protect the reputation of individual employees, the department, and the public from false or misleading allegations; and
6. Provide the public with a fair and effective means to redress their legitimate grievances against the department or individual employees.

I. CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

- A. The Citizen Complaint Form shall be used to record citizen or prisoner allegations of employee misconduct.
- B. Information may be given in person, over the telephone, in writing, or anonymously.
- C. When an allegation of employee misconduct is received, it will immediately be referred to a supervisor in the grade of Sergeant or higher for appropriate documentation on the Citizen Complaint Form.
- D. The supervisor shall document the complaint in writing and promptly forward the Citizen Complaint Form up the chain of command to the employee's Division Commander for his/her review. The original copy of the Citizen Complaint Form will be furnished to the Internal Affairs Officer.
- E. All complaints requiring further investigation will be handled in accordance with the General Order on Internal Affairs.

II. INQUIRIES

- A. An inquiry is a citizen-initiated contact with the department that specifically questions a policy, procedure, or practice or it may be a request that certain actions take place in response to an identified problem. Inquiries are matters that go beyond a general request for information or directions.
- B. When an inquiry is received, it will be handled by the employee, if appropriate, or it will be referred to a supervisor in the grade of Sergeant or higher for necessary action. If in the opinion of the supervisor the inquiry is of such a nature requiring the attention of other departmental personnel, a written report will be forwarded through the chain of command to the Divisional Commander.
- C. If a citizen questions the actions of an employee and it is determined by the supervisor that the employee acted within prescribed departmental policy and procedures, the supervisor shall make every attempt to explain why a particular policy, procedure, or practice is used.
- D. If the citizen is dissatisfied with the explanation, the supervisor shall document the inquiry in a written report and refer the matter up the chain of command to the Division Commander who shall contact the citizen to explain the department's procedures concerning the incident.

- E. If at anytime a supervisor determines that the employee(s) involved in an inquiry did not act within prescribed departmental policy or procedures, the report shall reflect the matter as an allegation of employee misconduct and an investigation shall be initiated as prescribed by appropriate departmental directives.
- F. All citizen requests for services or suggestions on how problem areas can be better addressed may be documented in a written report. If the matter cannot be handled by the supervisor the information shall be forwarded up the chain of command for appropriate evaluation and follow-up.

III. COMMENDATIONS

- A. Any information commending an employee for actions associated with his/her official duties or for community service activities shall be documented in a written report.
- B. When such information is received, it will be referred to a supervisor in the grade of Sergeant or higher for appropriate documentation.
- C. Specific information about the circumstances from the reporting party shall be documented. Any letters or other documentation received shall be attached to the report.
- D. The report shall be processed through the Division Commander to the Sheriff for his review and necessary action. When appropriate, the information received may serve as the basis for formal department recognition of the employee's action.
- E. A copy of the report will be forwarded to the Sheriff's Office administrative staff for placement in the employee's personnel file.



By Order of the Sheriff: **Chad K. Nichols**
Sheriff, Rabun County