



## **Citizen Complaint Process**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a process for citizens and members of the community to make official complaints against members of the Ridgely Police Department (RPD). Complaints made against department members for violations of existing policies and procedures will be handled by the Chief of Police or his/her designee. Complaints made against department members for violations of civil/criminal laws will be documented and referred to the Caroline County States Attorney's Office for investigation.

### **II. PROCEDURES**

- A. Any citizen or member of the community may make a complaint against any member of the RPD in person, by telephone, or by email. By policy, the Ridgely Police Department will accept anonymous complaints.
- B. Citizens making complaints shall be required to provide a name, mailing address, and phone number or email if they wish to receive notifications.
- C. In person and telephone complaints will be handled by the officer in charge at the time the complaint is lodged. Complaints will be handled in a neutral manner with no attempts to influence the complainant in a negative manner. Often times complaints of a minor nature can be handled informally by explaining current policies and practices used by members of the department.
- D. If a verbal explanation of current policies and practices is insufficient to address a complaint, then the complaint will be documented on RPD Form #42.
- E. Any complaint documented on RPD Form #42 will be placed in a sealed envelope and immediately forwarded to the Chief of Police.
- F. Any RPD member who receives a complaint against personnel via departmental email will immediately forward the entire electronic communication to the Chief of Police.

- G. The Chief of Police will be responsible for contacting any citizens or community member with an initial response to their complaint within 72 hours.
- H. The Chief of Police, or his/her designee, will determine if an official investigation is warranted based on the nature of the complaint, consultation with competent legal authority, and in accordance to current Law Enforcement Officer Bill of Rights (LEOBAR) regulations.
- I. In the event of an investigation, the complainant will receive an update to their complaint a minimum of one time per month until the complaint is resolved.
- J. The Chief of Police will notify the complainant of the outcome of the complaint within 72 hours of a disposition, including any discipline imposed in accordance with established confidentiality policies and any applicable law.

