



Training, Complaint Process & Review

PLEASANTVILLE POLICE REFORM AND REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE

JANUARY 14, 2021

Training, generally

- ▶ Academy Training
- ▶ In-Service Training
- ▶ Specialty Training
- ▶ Department Training

Academy Training

- ▶ The Basic Course for Police Officers includes 700 hours over 21 weeks of classroom, hands-on and scenario based training.
- ▶ All coursework is mandated by the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services and approved by the Municipal Police Training Council.
- ▶ Quarterly reviews at the state level of the curriculum for relevance and appropriateness.
- ▶ Upon completion, graduates receive a New York State certificate as Police Officers.

Academy Training

- ▶ Today's Basic Course for Police Officers covers a wide range of topics including but not limited to:
 - ▶ Penal Law, Criminal Procedure Law and other selected Statutes
 - ▶ Emergency Vehicle Operator's Course (EVOC)
 - ▶ Physical Fitness and Training
 - ▶ Firearms Safety and Proficiency
 - ▶ Defensive Tactics
 - ▶ First Aid and CPR
 - ▶ Standard Field Sobriety Testing and Recognizing Impaired Drivers

Academy Training

- ▶ Today's Basic Course for Police Officers covers a wide range of topics including but not limited to:
 - ▶ Ethics & Professionalism
 - ▶ Cultural Diversity
 - ▶ Bias Related Incidents
 - ▶ Professional Communication
 - ▶ Persons with Disabilities
 - ▶ Crisis Intervention
 - ▶ Use of Physical Force & Deadly Force
 - ▶ Active Shooter Response
 - ▶ Decision Making

In-Service Training

- ▶ Training with a Field Training Officer when new officers arrive, either from the Academy (24 days) or as a transfer (12 days).
- ▶ Familiarization with our processes, forms, streets, local points of interest, etc.
- ▶ First opportunity to meet and get to know people.

Specialty Training

- ▶ Training the Officers need to complete their professional responsibilities.
- ▶ Patrol: RADAR, Field Training Officer, Crisis Intervention, Firearms or General Topics Instructor, Supervisor school, etc.
- ▶ Detectives: Criminal Investigator, Crime Scene Processing, Interview and Interrogation, Juvenile Officer, etc.
- ▶ Includes Conferences and Workshop opportunities

Department Training

- ▶ Training provided in-house to keep officer's certifications current or to update on areas of focus and smart practices.
- ▶ Provided individually (roll call training) or to small groups.
- ▶ Training Includes:
 - ▶ Firearms, Use of Force and Active Shooter Response
 - ▶ First Aid and CPR
 - ▶ De-Escalation & Communication, Principled Policing and Anti-Bias Training

Disability Awareness

- ▶ Originally provided to all our officers in 2016, and currently a standard part of our In-Service Training block.
- ▶ It exposed our officers to the perils of dealing with persons on a non-criminal level, and understanding the challenges of various perceptions, a central theme of Procedural Justice training.

Anti-bias, Procedural Justice and Cultural Sensitivity

- ▶ Recent online training modules that were completed in the wake of the George Floyd incident.
- ▶ This Department is committed to providing training to our officers regarding social justice and fairness in policing.

Anti-bias, Procedural Justice and Cultural Sensitivity

- ▶ Training opportunities, especially train-the-trainer, are limited by a high demand throughout the state, as well as COVID precautions.
- ▶ We are expanding the relevancy and immediacy on these topics by sending an officer to become a certified trainer in Principled Policing.

New York State Accreditation

- ▶ Approximately 140 of the 514 Police Agencies in New York State are Accredited by the Department of Criminal Justice Services
- ▶ The policies (or “Standards”) used to certify Departments are publicly available, and we use “Critical Standards” as a template for our Policies and Procedures.

Personnel Complaints in the Pleasantville PD

Year	Number of Complaints	Outcome of Complaint
2020	2	1. Unfounded 2. Command Discipline
2019	0	
2018	1	Command Discipline (internal)
2017	3	1. Unsubstantiated 2. Retraining 3. Command Discipline
2016	1	Exonerated



However, we realize that zero complaints does not mean we achieved 100% satisfaction with all of our interactions.

Complaint Process

- ▶ Updated in 2018 after one of our Lieutenants attended an Internal Affairs school.
- ▶ The policy was updated to be simpler and more welcoming of complaints from the public.

The Challenge

- ▶ We understand that the process of filing a personnel complaint is time consuming and intimidating.
- ▶ We recognize that in many instances, people want to be heard, and make an officer's supervisors aware of a negative interaction, while not concerned with discipline.
- ▶ Therefore, we encourage supervisors to hear out the complainant and see if there is a question or misunderstanding that can easily be addressed.

The Goal

- ▶ Create a complaint process that is reasonable and responsive to the public, while being fair to the officers involved.
 - ▶ We recognize that members of the public coming forward with concerns about interactions are a valuable resource to the Department.
 - ▶ No requirement to file the forms in person.
 - ▶ The questions on the form do not require specific answers, and we do not completely dismiss the complaint if information is incomplete or inaccurate.
 - ▶ The narrative section can be as long or as short as the complainant is comfortable providing.
 - ▶ Anonymous complaints are accepted.

Informal Feedback

- ▶ We understand that people may be reluctant to come forward, so I have always welcomed reports of concern from citizens.
- ▶ Conversations between myself and people with concerns about an officer or an interaction are less restrictive than the formal complaint process.
- ▶ While proceeding this way removes the possibility for formal discipline, many people take advantage of this opportunity.
- ▶ Receive more good than bad comments.

Police Work is a Profession

- ▶ Concerns about our complaint process often center around “the fox watching the henhouse.”
- ▶ While disciplining officers may seem an unpleasant part of the job, it is necessary for a healthy organization, and if done correctly, can end up being a positive experience for the officer long-term.

Police Work is a Profession

- ▶ A **profession** is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards. This group positions itself as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and is recognised by the public as such. A profession is also prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others¹.

▶ <https://www.psc.gov.au/what-is-a-profession>

Progressive Discipline

- ▶ Progressive discipline is the process of using increasingly severe steps or measures when an employee fails to correct a problem after being given a reasonable opportunity to do so. The underlying principle of sound progressive discipline is to use the least severe action that you believe is necessary to correct the undesirable situation. Increase the severity of the action only if the condition is not corrected.

▶ <https://hr.iu.edu/training/ca/progressive.html>

What Happens When We Receive a Complaint?

- ▶ Our policy requires our officers to provide assistance to the person filing the complaint, and courteously answer any questions they may have.
- ▶ Once received, the form is reviewed for completeness.
- ▶ A receipt is provided to the complainant.
- ▶ Internal routing is determined by the severity of the allegation.

What Happens When We Receive a Complaint?

CATEGORY ONE (1) CIVILIAN COMPLAINTS:

- ▶ Any and all allegations that a member of the Department has:
 - ▶ Used unnecessary force;
 - ▶ Violated a specific criminal statute;
 - ▶ Committed an act(s) that amounts to corruption, including but not limited to:
 - ▶ Bribery or receiving unlawful gratuities.
 - ▶ Any other allegation, which in the opinion of the receiving Supervisor, amounts to serious misconduct.

What Happens When We Receive a Complaint?

CATEGORY ONE (1) CIVILIAN COMPLAINTS:

- ▶ The complaint is forwarded to the Chief of Police for reassignment to the Special Investigations Unit (our name for Internal Affairs).
- ▶ The investigation is led by a member of this Department with a rank no lower than Lieutenant.
- ▶ Cooperation and assistance may be sought by outside agencies, including other Police investigators, the Public Integrity Unit of the Westchester County District Attorney or the New York State Attorney General, as appropriate.

What Happens When We Receive a Complaint?

CATEGORY TWO (2) CIVILIAN COMPLAINTS

Include all complaints by civilians relating to:

- ▶ Inadequate service;
- ▶ Discourtesy;
- ▶ Improper procedure;
- ▶ Any other allegations involving members of the Department that are not included in Category 1.

What Happens When We Receive a Complaint?

- ▶ In most cases, the complaint is investigated by the Officer's Supervisor
- ▶ Interview of the complainant, the officer, any other officers present and any possible witnesses
- ▶ Any evidence, including video evidence, would be gathered and reviewed
- ▶ Any testing, if necessary, would be conducted

What Happens When We Receive a Complaint?

- ▶ The Supervisor prepares a report of his / her investigation and makes a recommendation for corrective action, and forwards same to the Appropriate Division Commander.
- ▶ The Division Commander reviews the investigation and the recommendation and either:
 - ▶ Return it to the Supervisor for additional follow-up, or;
 - ▶ Forwards the packet including his own recommendation, to the Chief.
- ▶ Chief reviews everything and makes the final determination regarding the need for retraining, counseling or discipline.