3-04/010.05 - Procedures for Department Service Reviews

A Department Service Review is an externally initiated supervisory review of the Department's or individual employee's performance. Externally initiated input is defined as that which is received from any member of the public. Department service reviews shall be documented on Service Comment Report forms. The watch commander of the unit shall initiate a service review by immediately interviewing any member of the public who, whether in person or by telephone, offers a comment. It is the watch commander's or supervising lieutenant's responsibility to hear every commendation or complaint, even if another unit's personnel are involved, and to immediately complete a Watch Commander's Service Comment Report form. In cases of public input received through the mail or electronic means, the unit commander shall designate a lieutenant to complete the Service Comment Report form. If a commendation or complaint concerns an employee not under the supervision of a lieutenant, that person's designated supervisor shall complete the Service Comment Report form.

NOTE: When a complaint or other form of service inquiry is received from a city official, county official, or member of their staff, or from a city official, county official, or staff member on behalf of a constituent, the complaint or service inquiry shall be immediately forwarded to the concerned unit commander. The concerned unit commander shall personally make the initial contact with the complaining party and personally supervise any subsequent review, inquiry, or investigation.

NOTE: The Service Comment Report process is intended to document and track public input about Department performance. It shall not be used to document internally generated supervisory observations about performance. Supervisory observations shall continue to be documented in the unit performance log, or through commendations and discipline as appropriate. As an example, if a lieutenant from another unit within the Department writes a letter or memorandum commending an employee, a Service Comment Report form would not be filled out. See section 3-02/140.05 for instructions on documenting internal commendations in the Performance Recording and Monitoring System.

NOTE: Custody Division procedures apply to inmate complaints about jail incidents and conditions, etc. The Service Comment Report form shall not be used to record complaints by inmates, friends or relatives of inmates who are non-involved or a non-aggrieved party while the inmate is in a Department custody facility. These type of complaints shall be processed pursuant to Custody Division Manual policy regarding "Referred Inmate Complaints." Department members from non-custodial units who receive a referred inmate complaint shall obtain the reporting party's name, return phone number and the inmate's name, booking number, and housing facility. The receiving Department member shall inform the caller they will be contacted by the custody facility watch commander as soon as notifications are complete. It shall be the responsibility of the receiving member to ensure that the concerned watch commander is immediately notified regarding the complaint.

Complaints received from inmates after they have been released shall be processed on an Inmate Complaint Form (not a Watch Commander Service Comment Report form) pursuant to Custody Division Manual policy regarding "Inmate Complaints." Complaints received by a watch commander at a station or custody facility, other than the facility at which the inmate was housed, shall be documented along with the inmate's personal information for notification, and forwarded to the appropriate facility watch commander to process.

NOTE: Members of the public who are unable to speak and/or write in English should be encouraged to submit the information in their native language.

The watch commander completing the Service Comment Report form shall fill in the information provided by the person offering the comment. The watch commander shall not require anyone who has responded to the unit in person, or made contact by phone, to submit a commendation or complaint in writing at a later time. The watch commander shall place a mark in the appropriate box indicating the nature of the comment, and shall mark the appropriate sub-category(s) as accurately as possible. The watch commander shall write a brief synopsis of the commendation or complaint in the "Synopsis of Contact/Event" section. This section is transferred verbatim into the data base and therefore it must be completed, even if the member of the public has furnished a written account of the event. The synopsis shall be restricted to 2 to 3 sentences so that the information fits into the data base field. Any written account provided by the member of the public shall be securely attached to the Service Comment Report form.

If the commendation or complaint involves more employees or parties than provided for on the form, the additional names shall be listed on a continuation page for involved employees (SH-R-437B). This page shall be labeled with the Service Comment Report serial number and be securely attached to the Service Comment form. The watch commander shall then print and sign his name and employee number on the face page of the form.

NOTE: Watch Commander Service Comment Reports shall be completed within 30 calendar days and forwarded to division.

If a member of the public offers a comment in person or by telephone, the watch commander shall inform the person that he will receive a letter in the mail from the unit commander acknowledging the comment. During telephonic comments or complaints, the watch commander shall field the call on a taped line if equipment is in place to do so, and shall provide the person with the Service Comment Report number prior to the conclusion of the telephone call. If the comment or complaint is made in person, the watch commander shall also do the following:

- give the complainant the green copy of the Service Comment Report form; and
- give the complainant a copy of the document “Procedures for Public Complaints” [SH-CR-596 (English or Spanish version as appropriate)].

After the reporting party green copy has been detached, the watch commander shall fill out the remainder of the Service Comment Report form as thoroughly as possible. The watch commander may also write additional narrative on a memo explaining the commendation or complaint in greater detail, if necessary, to adequately inform the unit commander about the service comment. This is appropriate in those cases where the reporting party has not submitted a written account and the synopsis, although sufficient for defining the commendation or complaint for data entry purposes, does not provide adequate detail to allow the unit commander to make an informed evaluation. The watch commander shall then forward the remaining copies of the Service Comment Report form to the unit commander. Unit commanders shall ensure that the Service Comment Report is completed and forwarded to the Discovery Unit within 60 days of receipt of the initial complaint.

Although it is the unit commander’s responsibility to determine the appropriate supervisory response, in some cases the watch commander can conduct and document much or all of the review and submit the documentation with the Service Comment Report form for the unit commander’s approval.

NOTE: When there are allegations of criminal misconduct, the Service Comment Report form shall be forwarded to the concerned unit commander immediately and confidentially. If such a complaint is filed at another unit, the person completing the Service Comment Report form shall also verbally notify the concerned unit commander as soon as possible.