

How to file a complaint with The Sheriff's Office

PERSISTENCE AND CLARITY CAN GET YOU WHAT YOU NEED.

Before you contact anyone, it's a good idea to decide exactly what the problem is and what remedy you are seeking. If you decide to speak with someone at The Sheriff's Office, pleasantly state the issue and what you want. Persist. Ask if a supervisor is available to speak with you.

ASK QUESTIONS.

Some good questions to ask include:

- Why was the situation handled the way it was?
- What law or policy applies?
- Was the law or policy applied consistently?

WRITE IT DOWN.

Any time you speak to someone at The Sheriff's Office about your complaint, it's a good idea to keep records of the contact you have made. Try to get the names of the staff people you speak with, and be sure to include the date of your conversation. Keep copies of any documents you get from, or give to the agency. Also, a chronological sequence of contacts and dates is helpful in investigating your complaint.

PLEASANTNESS MAKES A DIFFERENCE.

Public employees, like most of us, respond favorably when a courteous approach is used.

Where to file a complaint about The Sheriff's Office

Complaints about the conduct of King County Sheriff's deputies can be made at local precincts, IIU, or the Ombudsman's Office.

Internal Investigations Unit
516 3rd Avenue • Room W-116
Seattle, WA 98104-3268 • 206.296.4200

Precinct Two
18118 73rd Avenue NE • Kenmore, WA 98028
206.296.5020

Precinct Three
22300 SE 231st Street • Maple Valley, WA 98038
206.296.3883

Precinct Four
14905 6th Avenue SW • Burien, WA 98166
206.296.3333

Precinct Five
1206 N 185th Street • Shoreline, WA 98133
206.546.0793

Alternate formats available upon request.

Office of Citizen Complaints — Ombudsman
401 Fifth Ave, Suite 135 • Seattle, WA 98104
1.800.325.6165 ext. 3-9242
206.263.9242 V/TTY • 206.296.0948 Fax
ombudsman@kingcounty.gov
www.kingcounty.gov/ombudsman

Rev. 9/07



King County Office of Citizen Complaints Ombudsman

Complaints About The Sheriff's Office



King County

An independent agency of the
Metropolitan King County Council

What is the King County Ombudsman's Office?

The Ombudsman's Office is an independent office located within the legislative branch of King County government. We are authorized to investigate a wide variety of complaints about King County government and to make and publish recommendations for change based on the results of our investigations.

Can the Ombudsman's Office investigate complaints about the King County Sheriff?

Yes. We have jurisdiction to investigate complaints about The Sheriff's Office. The majority of our investigations focus on how the Sheriff's Internal Investigations Unit (IIU) responds to citizen complaints alleging unprofessional conduct, unnecessary force, or violations of law, policy, or procedure.

When should I contact the Ombudsman's Office?

First, file your complaint with the Sheriff's IIU. If you are not satisfied with their investigation, or if you are uncomfortable contacting IIU, we can contact them on your behalf, or we may take your complaint. It is best to file the complaint as timely as possible, usually no later than 30 days after the incident, or IIU's response to your complaint.

Can I file a complaint even though I have a pending court case?

Yes. A pending court case or citation does not prevent you from filing a complaint about officer conduct with IIU or the Ombudsman's Office. However, if you are given a citation or charged with a crime that you don't feel you are guilty of, you should contest these in court. It's important to talk with an attorney, and to appear at any scheduled court dates.

Who can file a complaint with the Ombudsman's Office?

We accept complaints from the aggrieved party or eye-witness to the incident. We make exceptions to this practice when the complaint is made by the parent of a minor child, legal guardian, or when the complaint is made on behalf of someone who is disabled or otherwise unable to contact us on their own.

What will happen after I file my complaint?

If your complaint is appropriate for investigation, Ombudsman's Office staff will contact The Sheriff's Office, review agency records, and research relevant law, policy, and procedure. We may interview witnesses and agency staff. After the investigation is completed, we will advise you of the outcome of the investigation and any action taken on your behalf.

How long will it take to investigate my complaint?

Every case is different and there is no set length of time that can be taken to complete the investigation. The length of time we may take to complete an investigation depends on the nature and complexity of the complaint.

Why should I file a complaint?

The majority of officers perform their duty with professionalism and concern for the community. That's why complaints alleging officer misconduct are taken very seriously by The Sheriff's Office and the Ombudsman's Office. A complaint that is investigated by IIU could result in officer discipline, up to and including termination, or appropriate training. Citizen complaints also serve to alert supervisors to potential problems, and can prevent future occurrences of police misconduct.

How do I contact the Ombudsman's Office?

Call, write, e-mail, or visit us at:
Office of Citizen Complaints – Ombudsman
401 Fifth Ave, Suite 135 • Seattle, WA 98104
206.263.9242 V/TTY
www.kingcounty.gov/ombudsman
ombudsman@kingcounty.gov
Our business hours are 8:30am - 4:30 pm, M-F