
GENERAL INFORMATION

The Howe Police Department is dedicated to providing the best law enforcement service possible to all citizens. Police Department members are carefully selected and given the best training possible in order to provide this service. However, you may have occasion to lodge a complaint about the actions of a member of the Howe Police Department. In order to be responsive, information is provided about how a complaint is made, how it is investigated, and the result.

Service issues not associated with employee misconduct should be directed to the Chief of Police for performance review.

It is the policy of the Howe Police Department to give equal treatment under the law to all people, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, politics, national origin, lifestyle, or similar characteristics. The members of the Howe Police Department will only stop or detain citizens when reasonable suspicion exists to believe they have committed, are committing, or are about to commit a violation of the law, or for other lawful purposes. Members of the Howe Police Department are strictly prohibited from initiating any action that constitutes racial or biased-based profiling. Citizens should file any complaints by following the procedure set forth in this brochure.

Chief of Police - Matt Whitworth

700 W. Haning St.

Howe, TX 75459

(903) 532-9971

mwhitworth@cityofhowe.org

CITIZEN COMPLAINT PROCESS



HOWE POLICE DEPARTMENT

*700 W. HANING ST.
HOWE, TX 75459*

P: (903) 532-9971

F: (903) 532-0091

HOW ARE COMPLAINTS MADE?

When a citizen files a complaint against a member of the Howe Police Department, the complaint is sent to the Chief of Police for review and assignment.

Citizens wishing to file a complaint may do so in several different ways:

1. Contact any supervisor; or
2. Contact the Chief of Police; or
3. Contact the City Administrator
4. Print a copy of the Citizen Complaint Form

The office is open during normal business hours and is located at 700 W. Haning St. Howe, Texas. If you prefer, you may call, write a letter, or email to begin the process.

The Texas Government Code, Section 614.022 provides that all complaints against law enforcement officers must be in writing and signed by the person making the complaint. Citizens wishing to file a complaint against any member of the Howe Police Department must submit a written and signed complaint. Just as citizens placed under arrest, Howe Police Department members must receive notification of the charges against them, and be provided a with copy of the complaint before any disciplinary action is taken.

Complaints must be made within 90 days of the incident complained about, except in special cases such as criminal misconduct or when the person making the complaint can show good cause. Complaints must be made by the person who claims to be aggrieved, except that, in the

case of a minor, a guardian may file the complaint. Other persons may give statements as witnesses. After an Internal Affairs Investigation is completed, you will be advised of the results.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A COMPLAINT IS FOUND TO BE TRUE (SUSTAINED)?

When the investigation of a complaint reveals that the charges are true and should be sustained against the officer, the Chief of Police notifies the member and may take one of the following actions, depending on the nature of the violation:

1. Counsel or reprimand the employee;
2. Suspend the employee without pay;
3. Demote the employee; or
4. Discharge the employee

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A COMPLAINT IS NOT SUSTAINED?

Police Department members must be afforded certain rights, the same as with all citizens, and complaints must be supported by sufficient evidence. If there is not sufficient evidence to sustain the complaint, the Department member is notified and remains on duty. The complainant is also notified by mail of the results of the investigation.

WHAT IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE DECISION?

If you are not satisfied with the results of the investigation, you may appeal to:

1. *Matt Whitworth - Chief of Police*
(903) 532-9971
mwhitworth@cityofhowe.org
2. *Joe Shephard - City Administrator*
(903) 532-5571
jshephard@cityofhowe.org

The Howe Police Department is vitally interested in the welfare of all citizens and in taking appropriate action where its members have proven derelict in their duties or are guilty of wrongdoing. If it becomes necessary for you to make a complaint, you can be assured that a fair and thorough investigation will occur.

By the same token, if you have an occasion to see a Howe Police Department member doing outstanding or commendable work, please let us know. Your Howe Police Department members are highly dedicated individuals who are proud to serve you and the community.

MEMBERS CAN APPEAL THE DECISION

Just as citizens charged with a criminal offense can appeal a court's decision, a Police Department member may also appeal any disciplinary action taken against them. The City of Howe has established procedures for its members to follow in their appeals, just as the Police Department has established procedures for insuring that citizen complaints are thoroughly and honestly investigated.