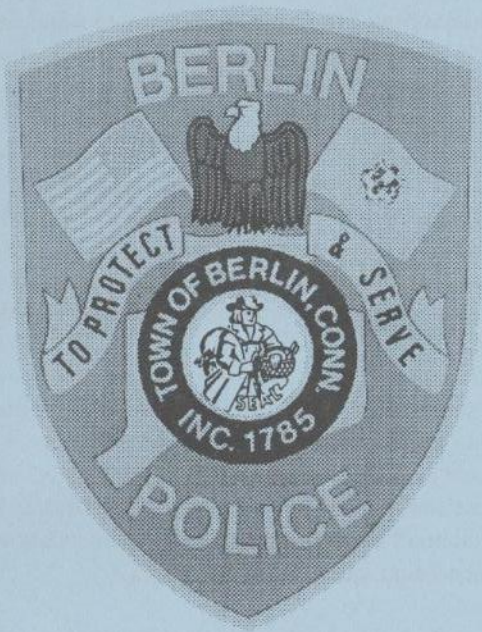


BERLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

COMMENDATION OR COMPLAINT

*How to officially commend or complain
about a Police Department employee.*



MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Berlin Police Department is to enhance the quality of life throughout the Town of Berlin by working cooperatively with all of our citizens to preserve the peace, enforce the law, reduce the perception of fear, and provide for a safe and caring environment.

ABOUT THE BERLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

In our efforts to fulfill our mission statement, the Berlin Police Department offers a complete range of professional services through a dedicated, well trained, professional staff. We offer all the services indicative of a modern, progressive police department.

Services range from investigations of serious criminal matters to specialized juvenile programs such as D.A.R.E., a Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program.

The Berlin Police Department, each day, offers professional police services not only to the resident population of 17,000, but also to a daily influx of citizens from other communities who pass through the Town of Berlin via major State Highways such as Route 9 and Routes 5 and 15 and who work in Berlin or seek services and entertainment offered in Berlin.

Each year, the Berlin Police Department responds to more than 25,000 calls for service, over 7,000 of which are traffic related, 3,000 of a criminal nature and 15,000 of a general nature where police services are needed. In a typical year, less than 5 of these incidents result in formal citizens complaints against members of the department.

The standards of the Berlin Police Department are among the highest in the nation, and our Officers among the best trained. Our community, and the level of police service that we all benefit from, can best prosper by your support of these standards by commendation, recommendation, question, or complaint.

As a means of maintaining both police performance and police/community relations, the Berlin Police Department encourages citizens recommendations for improvements in our policing, welcomes the commendation of police personnel who admirably perform their duties and encourages questions or complaints about the department's performance or actions of its members.

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

The department provides two methods for the investigation and resolution of complaints against its members. One method is informal, the other formal.

As in all organizations, most complaints against employees can be resolved by the employee's Supervisor. This is considered as informal investigation. In an informal investigation, the Officer's Supervisor meets with the complainant, meets with the employee, and then determines the appropriate action to take to resolve the complaint.

With more serious complaints of misconduct, the Supervisor will take an initial statement from the complainant and then refer the incident to his or her superior.

This type of complaint will be brought to the attention of the Chief of Police and he may order a formal investigation by the Internal Affairs Unit.

THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS PROCESS

The Internal Affairs Unit, under the direct authority of the Chief of Police, investigates all formal complaints of misconduct by department personnel when the Chief of Police orders such investigation to be conducted.

The goal of the Internal Affairs Unit is to ensure that the integrity of the department is maintained and that objectivity, fairness, and justice are ensured by an impartial investigation and review of each complaint assigned to it.

If your complaint results in a formal investigation assigned by the Chief of Police, a thorough, impartial and confidential investigation will be conducted by the Internal Affairs Unit. The investigation will usually include the examination of physical evidence and interviews with all witnesses, the complainant, and subject Officers.

After the allegations have been fully investigated, the Chief of Police will determine what action, if any, should be taken to resolve the complaint.

FILING A COMPLAINT

It is normally the responsibility of the employee's Supervisor to meet with you to discuss your complaint. If the employee's Supervisor is not readily available, or you cannot meet with him/her because of scheduling, you may ask to speak with the on-duty Supervisor.

The Supervisor, or designee, will meet with you privately, as soon as practicable, to discuss your complaint. **YOUR COMPLAINT WILL BE RECEIVED IN A POLITE, PROFESSIONAL MANNER, AND YOU ARE EXPECTED TO CONDUCT YOURSELF IN A SIMILAR MANNER.** If your conduct is considered inappropriate, the Supervisor may insist that you return at another time to discuss the complaint.

You may also file a complaint by writing a letter directly to the Chief of Police. Your letter will given appropriate attention; however, definitive action can only be taken after a thorough investigation, and your cooperation with the investigation of your complaint will be needed to insure proper handling of our mutual concerns.

While the Berlin Police Department does encourage citizens to file complaints, the complaints must be made in good faith. Should the department discover that the person or persons acting as complainants or witnesses made statements which he/she knew or believed to be false, the department could pursue criminal action against that person. Civil action against an untruthful complainant could be instituted by the employee who is the subject of a false complaint.

WHEN YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT:

- Ask to speak to the employee's Supervisor.

- Explain your complaint to the Supervisor. He/she will attempt to identify the exact nature of your complaint and identity of those involved.
- If appropriate, the Supervisor will resolve the matter directly. If so, you may be asked to sign a statement indicating that you agree to have the employee's Supervisor address the issue.
- If appropriate, or at your insistence, the Supervisor will begin the process that will lead to a possible formal Internal Affairs Investigation. If so, you will be asked to provide a written statement detailing your complaint.
- You will be asked to sign an acknowledgement stating that you understand that any false or untrue statement made by you in the course of this complaint may subject you to criminal or civil law liability.
- An investigator from the Internal Affairs Unit may contact you to schedule an interview.
- Once the Internal Affairs Unit has interviewed all those involved and gathered all the facts concerning your allegations, the matter will be presented to the Chief of Police.
- The Chief of Police will determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence, whether or not the employee violated any of the rules and regulations of the Berlin Police Department.
- If the Chief of Police determines that the employee did violate the rules and regulations of this department, the employee will be disciplined in accordance with those rules and regulations.
- Your complaint will also be reviewed for indications of ways we can improve policies, procedures, or training in the future.
- You will receive written notification of the determination made by the Chief of Police, regardless of the outcome.

COMMENDING SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE:

If you wish to commend the actions of any Berlin Police Department employee, you can

- Ask to speak to the employee's Supervisor and verbally communicate your praise; or,
- You can write a letter to the Chief of Police explaining your praise.

Commendations received by the Chief of Police for any Berlin Police Department employee result in advising the employee of your gratitude and in permanently recording his/her actions and your appreciation in the employee's personnel file. The employee will also be officially cited by the posting of your letter of appreciation on the department daily bulletin board and depending on the situation, could be considered for other departmental awards or recognition. Minimally, the employee is made aware of your kindness and appreciation.

WHEN YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Berlin Police Department is committed to providing the best police service possible. Citizen cooperation and input is essential if the department is to succeed in this goal. If you have any questions about any specific action taken by the department, have questions about how the department operates, or have a recommendation on how we can improve your police services; you can:

- Call the Supervisor's office at 828-7081 or
- Call the Patrol Lieutenant's office at 828-7084
- Call the Police Chief at 828-7093
- Email the Police Chief:
Policechief@town.berlin.ct.us

Your questions and recommendations can also be mailed directly to:

Berlin Police Department
240 Kensington Road
Berlin, CT 06037-2647