

# The Abbeville County Emergency Management Department Citizen Complaint procedure is intended to help you, the community, and the responders as well.

If you have a concern about the practices or personnel of the Abbeville County Emergency Management Department, What can you do about it?

A positive relationship between the Agency and the public they serve, fostered by confidence and trust, is essential to effective Law Enforcement, Emergency Medical Service and Fire Service.

It is important, therefore, that adequate provisions be made for the prompt receipt, investigation and disposition of complaints regarding the conduct of Department personnel. To this end, the Abbeville County Emergency Management Department welcomes criticism of the Department and valid complaints against its members or procedures.

The purpose of the Internal Affairs Division is to ensure complete, fair, and impartial investigations of citizen complaints.

## HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

The first step is to call, write, come in person or visit us online:

Internal Affairs Division  
Abbeville County Emergency Management  
394 Highway 28 By-Pass  
Abbeville, SC 29620  
Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Mon - Fri

Phone: 864-366-2400 x 221  
(after hours: 864-366-8451)

Mailing Address:  
P.O Box 1010  
Abbeville, SC 29620

Web Page: [www.abbeville911.org](http://www.abbeville911.org)

A complaint may be made ANY time of day or night. You may come in person to address your concern, or you can call or write -- anonymously, if you wish.

## INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

The person receiving your concern will ask you to provide as much information as possible regarding the incident. If you were involved in or witnessed the incident, it is extremely important to the investigation that a statement be obtained from you. From your statement, a Citizen Contact form may be completed. If your concern stems from an arrest or citation issued to a family member or yourself, it may not be investigated until the legal matter has been settled.

Depending on the circumstances of your concern, it may be investigated in one of two ways. It will either be forwarded to the employee's supervisor for inquiry or to the Internal Affairs Division for investigation.

Each allegation is examined on its own merits. Formal investigations require investigators to contact all available witnesses and examine any relevant physical evidence, and gather all information pertinent to each allegation made in the complaint. Investigation of the complaint must be completed within 5 days, Periodic status reports will be provided when the case extends beyond 30 days.

The Deputy Director or Director will render a finding in each case. There are four possible findings:

**Sustained:** The investigation disclosed enough evidence to clearly prove the allegation.

**Not sustained:** The investigation failed to reveal enough evidence to clearly prove or disprove the allegation.

**Exonerated:** The act which proved the basis for the complaint did occur; however investigation revealed the act was justified, lawful and proper.

**Unfounded:** The investigation has produced sufficient evidence to prove that the act or acts alleged did not occur. This finding shall also apply when individual personnel named in the complaint were not involved in an act that did occur.

You will be notified of the finding in writing at the conclusion of the investigation.

When a finding of "Sustained" is determined, corrective action will be taken.

If allegations against the employee(s) are sustained, the Abbeville County Emergency Management cannot release to you any type of disciplinary actions taken.

The investigation may also conclude that the employee(s) acted properly or that there is not enough information to prove or disprove the allegations.

## Summing Up

Your valid concerns and criticisms help us protect the community from possible misconduct by employees. At the same time, a thorough and impartial investigation procedure helps protect employees from unwarranted charges when they perform their duties properly.

*“You have the right to make a complaint against a employee for any improper conduct. You have a right to a written description of this procedure. This agency may find after investigation that there is not enough evidence to warrant action on your complaint; even if that is the case, you have the right to make the complaint and have it investigated if you believe an employee behaved improperly. Citizen complaints must be retained by this agency for at least five years. It is against the law to make a complaint that you know to be false. If you make a complaint against an employee knowing that it is false, you can be prosecuted on a misdemeanor charge.”*

## Emergency Management Department



### **Mission Statement**

We, the men and women of the Abbeville County Department of Emergency Management, are dedicated to improving the quality of life in our community by providing an effective channel of communication between the public and public safety providers.

We are committed to providing a professional response to each call for service that is caring and helpful.

We are responsible for the uninterrupted flow of information in the area of emergency services communication.

We are organized, trained, and committed to maximize effective and efficient public service and to maintain a positive work environment.

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## Citizen Complaint Procedure



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