

Telephone Listings

All Emergencies 911
Sheriff's Office220-7000
Professional Standards220-7062
Uniform Patrol Division 220-7140
Criminal Investigations Division 220-7060
Traffic Division 220-7144
Community Programs Division 220-7013

**Martin County Sheriff's Office
Citizen
Commendation
And
Complaint Procedures**



Robert L. Crowder, Sheriff

800 S.E. Monterey Road
Stuart, Florida 34994

(772) 220-7000

Who may Commend a Member of the Sheriff's Office?

Commendations may be done by mail or in person by:

- Any Citizen
- Inmate
- Member of the Sheriff's Office.

Commendations may be submitted to an employee in the Administration Division, or a Law Enforcement Supervisor. If you choose to make a commendation in person, the office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Why should I Commend Anyone?

There are many times in a Sheriff's Office member's duties that an opportunity to perform an extraordinary service for someone presents itself. This service might be:

- Assisting someone who is physically or mentally challenged in making a report or obtaining needed information.
- Offering assistance above and beyond what is routine
- Volunteering assistance to educate citizen groups or clubs in crime trends, or protecting one's person and property from criminal attack.
- Putting their life on the line for another human being.

The Sheriff is very concerned about his employees and wants them to receive the credit they deserve for doing an outstanding job. Many times, these outstanding performances go unnoticed because of the size of this agency. That is why the Sheriff relies on those, who have been a recipient of any special service, to let him or other supervisors know when a member deserves to be recognized for an exceptional performance.

By taking time to acknowledge a deserving member of the agency, you may have an influence of the member's opportunity for a promotion.

When you take the time to acknowledge the special service you received from a Sheriff's Office member, you will be recognized also. Sheriff Crowder writes a personal note to everyone who has taken part of their valuable time to let him know on an excellent job the members of his agency are performing every day.

Who may register a Complaint?

As in every profession, there are times when it becomes necessary to formally register a complaint regarding inappropriate behavior by a member of the Sheriff's Office. A complaint should be made in person and may be done by:

- A Citizen
- An Inmate
- A Member of the Sheriff's Office

Anonymous complaints will be handled at the discretion of the Sheriff.

A complaint may be submitted to any supervisor to the Sheriff's Office. All complaints are forwarded to the Professional Standards Unit, whose regular hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. In addition, there is an investigator available upon request 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Professional Standards Unit

The function of the Professional Standards Unit is to investigate allegations of misconduct and corruption. When a complaint is received, every effort is made to ensure a thorough, timely and fair investigation of the allegation contained in the complaint. The Professional Standards Unit provides a systematic, objective and an impartial investigation of all complaints of inappropriate behavior against Sheriff's personnel, both sworn and non-sworn.

Complaint Procedure

All complaints are thoroughly investigated and a report is then written. The charges are found to be false or unfounded, or the member is exonerated, the accused have the right to pursue civil recourse against the complainant.

A completed investigative report includes:

- A narrative summary of the events
- A find of action, which is determined by the sworn statements of those involved, and other relevant evidence.

Prior to leaving the Professional Standards Unit, the report is reviewed by the Professional Standards Supervisor for completeness and objectivity.

The report must not reflect any personal opinion but must present an unbiased picture of the circumstances as they occurred. This permits the examiner to report a proper recommendation s to the findings in the case.

The report is then forwarded to the Sheriff for his evaluation. If the Sheriff has reason to believe that there was misconduct on the part of the member, the member may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Sheriff's Office rules and regulations.

The disposition of complaints are classified as follows:

- **Sustained:** The allegation is supported by sufficient evidence.
- **Partially sustained:** The incident has two (2) or more allegations, and at least one (1) of the allegations is sustained.
- **Policy Failure:** the policy/procedure does not properly address the allegation or conflict in policy/procedure that led to the alleged conduct.
- **Unfounded:** The allegation was demonstrably false, or there is no credible evidence to support the complaint.
- **Not Sustained (Unsubstantiated):** the investigation failed to disclose sufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation.
- **Exonerated:** An incident occurred, but the individual's actions were lawful and proper.
- **Misconduct Not Based on the Original Complaint:** Substantiated misconduct not report in the initial allegation but uncovered during the investigation.

In all cases, the member is notified of the disposition.

A proper relationship between the Sheriff and the citizens of Martin County, fostered by confidence and trust, is essential to effective law enforcement. Sheriff's Office members must be free to exercise their best judgment and to initiate action in a reasonable, lawful impartial manner without fear and reprisal. At the same time, they must honor the rights of all people.

This system of complaint and disciplinary procedures not only subjects the member to corrective action when he or she conducts him or herself improperly, but also protects the member from unwarranted criticism when he or she discharges his or her duties properly.