

BURLINGTON POLIC DEPARTMENT
PRESS RELEASE
May 10th, 2016

BURLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT TO ACCEPT ONLINE CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

The Burlington Police Department is pleased to announce that, effective immediately, we will accept citizen complaints about our employees online, via our website. Citizens wishing to make these complaints will be able to do so from any device and location that provides access to the internet: via laptop and desktop computers, tablets and smartphones. They are not required to contact the police in person, nor to identify themselves if they wish to remain anonymous.

“In Burlington and elsewhere, successful policing requires strong trust between police officers and the neighborhoods they are responsible for protecting,” said Mayor Miro Weinberger. “We are fortunate to have dedicated officers who work hard to serve our community, and I appreciate that the department is seeking to build on that trust by enabling citizens to more easily make complaints about the police department when necessary.”

“In 2015, the Burlington Police Department received a dozen civilian complaints. This is in the context of hundreds of thousands of interactions with citizens a year under situations of stress, duress, volatility and uncertainty,” said Brandon del Pozo, Chief of Police. “Such a small number of complaints confirms the professionalism of our officers. Still, to retain our legitimacy, we must be sure that no citizen fails to make a complaint due to obstacles in the reporting process. We need to indentify officers who need guidance on how to perform their work more professionally. With online reporting as an expansion of our recent policy of a publicly-accessible printed form, we have created the most accessible citizen complaint reporting system in Vermont.”

Citizens may now make complaints against the police via the following means:

- Online, via the department’s website, at any time;
- In person, at One North Avenue, at any time;
- By telephone to One North Avenue, at any time;
- By mail using the printable online form, at any time;
- To the mayor’s office, during business hours;
- To city councilors by means of the printable online form;
- To members of the police commission by means the printable online form;
- To the Community Justice Center and the Peace and Justice Center via means of the printable online form;

Persons who are not fluent in English are encouraged to have a person assist them with the completion of a complaint by any of these means. If complainants come to One North Avenue, the police department will provide a translator via the Language Line for the completion of the form.

Citizens may access forms and procedures for making complaints at the following address:

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/Police/Citizen-Complaints-about-Police-Conduct>