

Internal Affairs

All citizens who seek to file a complaint shall be promptly directed to a supervisor or Internal Affairs in order to record the complaint. Members/employees shall explain the complaint and investigative process to citizens who inquire about filing a complaint.

All complaints, regardless of nature of manner received, with the exception of those associated with pending civil litigation, will be entered on a Complaint Against Police Officer Form.

If a citizen wishes to remain anonymous, such indication will be written on the form by the receiving member.

If a citizen telephones the Department, he/she will be directed to come to the police station to file the complaint or referred to Internal Affairs. If necessary or requested, a Complaint Against Police Officer Form may be mailed to the citizen or an Internal Affairs investigator shall make arrangements to meet with the citizen if they are physically unable to respond to the police station.

When a citizen is found to be physically unable or lacks the minimum writing skills to complete the form, it shall be prepared by the receiving member/employee.

Citizens unable to speak or write in English should be encouraged to submit the complaint in their native language or have an interpreter available.

Internal Affairs

www.winterhavenpd.com

Phone: 863-291-5858, ext. 2346

Do you have a compliment for a member?

Our members take great pride in being recognized by members of the public when they have performed their duties in an exceptional manner. When members receive accolades and encouragement from the public, it improves morale and encourages all members to work harder.

If you would like to tell us about an exceptional service that you were the recipient of or that you observed, you have a few options:

Write a letter and mail it to the Chief of Police, 125 N. Lake Silver Dr., NW, Winter Haven, FL 33881

Send an email with the pertinent details to: whpdcommendations@mywinterhaven.com

Visit the Department at 125 N. Lake Silver Dr., NW, Winter Haven, FL 33881 and submit the information in person.



David Brannan, Chief of Police

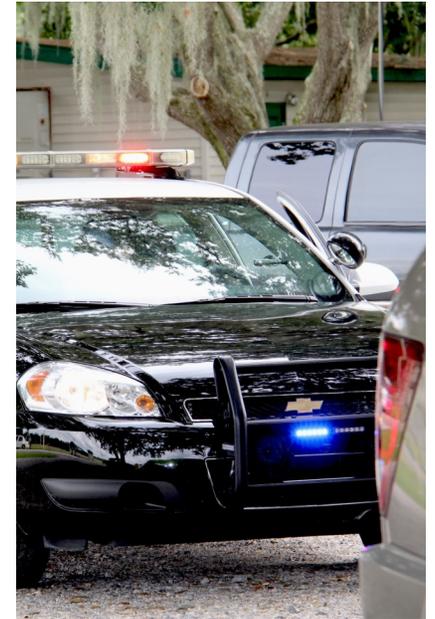
125 N. Lake Silver Dr., NW
Winter Haven, FL 33881

Lobby Hours: Mon - Fri 8 a.m.—5 p.m.

Administrative Line: 863-291-5858
Non-Emergency Line: 863-401-2256



Interacting with Law Enforcement



Regardless of why you are speaking with an officer, the tips in this brochure should help ensure that the interaction is polite, courteous and professional.

Honor In Service

The Golden Rule: do unto others as you would have done to you.

As a general rule, it's always best to be polite and courteous to others as you conduct your daily business. While officers will always be expected to stay polite and professional, this simple step will help ensure that interactions with law enforcement officials remain cordial. Everyone likes to be treated with respect and dignity; a police officer is no different. In return, you should expect polite and courteous officers who may be firm but fair. While it is not illegal to be rude or discourteous, doing so will both complicate the situation and could potentially lengthen the time of any detention (such as a traffic stop, contact with a reported suspicious person, etc.).

Don't interfere with officers while they are carrying out official duties.

If you see an officer with a vehicle stopped or officers interviewing a subject in public, those officers are actively carrying out official duties. Unless you have an emergency situation, those officers should not be interrupted.

If you wish to photograph or film officers while conducting business in a public place, you are certainly allowed to. You must, however, take care not to interfere with an active investigation or official duties. If you wish to film, you must do so from a safe spot, at an appropriate distance from the incident and you should not expect an officer to spend any time responding to questions or comments. If an officer tells you that you are too close to them, then you are too close.

Don't lie or give false information to an officer.

It is a crime to give false information to a law enforcement officer. It is also a crime for a person to willfully resist an officer attempting to conduct their official duties.

The Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution protects you from self-incrimination; it does NOT give you the right to lie or deceive law enforcement officers. Regardless of the initial reason for the encounter, giving false information to an officer is sure to complicate the situation.

Arguments are for the courtroom, not in the field.

The correct venue for arguing about a traffic ticket or a criminal charge is not on the side of the road with the officer. This should be done in a courtroom on your court date. You may not agree with the charges against you, but you can't resist a lawful order from an officer. Compliance with lawful orders is key in these situations.



If you feel you were not treated fairly, you may file a complaint.

The Winter Haven Police Department strives to provide professional, courteous service to residents of and visitors. If you feel that you were treated unfairly during an interaction with a Winter Haven Police Officer, you may file a complaint.

You may come to the Police Department and pick up the necessary forms to file the formal complaint and an investigation will begin. You may also request to speak to the officer's immediate supervisor while on scene or at a later time.

It is important to lodge a complaint as soon as is practicable to ensure a thorough investigation. The more time that passes between an incident and a complaint, the harder it is to properly investigate the complaint.

If you request it, officers are required to give their name, the name of their immediate supervisor and a phone number to reach that supervisor at. Winter Haven Police Officers DO NOT have badge numbers.

Winter Haven Police vehicle numbers should be on the back of the vehicle. However, there could be a change depending on that officer's assignment, vehicle repair schedules and other factors.

We take every complaint seriously and vow to ensure a fair and thorough investigation will be conducted.

David Brannan, Chief of Police