

## **What is the Office of the Police Monitor?**

The Office of the Police Monitor (OPM), is an independent civilian, administrative office with the City of Austin. The OPM provides oversight of the Austin Police Department (APD) in addressing concerns and complaints of alleged administrative violations of APD policy. The OPM is responsible for monitoring the investigation of complaints made against APD. It is the vehicle for citizens to voice and file complaints of misconduct by APD officers.

## **Why does the Office of the Police Monitor matter?**

The OPM matters because it provides oversight of investigations into allegations of police misconduct. Oversight ensures the investigations are fair and thorough, which helps to keep APD accountable to the community it serves. The work of the OPM has resulted in improved police policies. For example, the OPM has played a critical role in the implementation of new APD policies around police pursuits, providing medical attention to a suspect, discharging of weapons at moving vehicles, the use of body worn cameras, and de-escalation tactics.

## **Is the OPM part of the police department?**

### **Why should I trust the OPM?**

No, the OPM is not part of the police department. The OPM answers to the City Manager. You should trust the OPM because the OPM is staffed by civilian employees and is independent from the APD. The OPM is free to agree or disagree with the decisions of the APD.

## **What can I do if I think an APD officer did something wrong?**

One of the things you can do is file a complaint with the OPM. You may also reach out to the OPM to discuss your concern. If you would like to speak directly to the officer's supervisor, the OPM will assist you with that process.

## **What if I don't know which policy the officer may have violated?**

There are many policies officers have to follow and you don't need to know them. If you have a question about whether a certain kind of behavior by an officer is against the APD policies, you can contact the OPM to ask at (512) 974-9090 or at [police.monitor@austintexas.gov](mailto:police.monitor@austintexas.gov).

## **Does it matter whether I file a complaint?**

Yes, it does matter. By speaking out about a possible problem with an officer, you are alerting the APD leadership about ways to improve the police department. Also, the OPM looks for trends in complaints. When we identify patterns, we make recommendations to APD for improvements.

## **Do I have to know the officer's name or badge number?**

No, you don't. While it's useful information, if you don't have that information, you can still file your complaint. If you would like to speak directly to the officer's supervisor, the OPM will assist you with that process.

## **Can I file a complaint with the OPM against an officer who is not with the Austin Police Department?**

No. The OPM can only process your complaint if it is about an APD officer. Complaints about officers employed by other law enforcement agencies cannot be filed with the OPM.



**Who can file a complaint with the OPM?**

Any member of the public can file a complaint about an APD officer. You may file a complaint about something that happened to you, or about something that happened to somebody else if you were a witness to the incident. You can live in Austin or outside the city. You can be a U.S. citizen, or you can be an immigrant – with or without papers. The OPM will never ask you about your immigration status. You can be a young person or you can be an adult. You can also file a complaint if you are a defendant in a criminal case; but if the case is related to the complaint you want to tell us about, we recommend that you seek legal advice. Lastly, OPM complaint forms are available in English and Spanish.

**Does the OPM investigate my complaint?**

No, complaints filed with the OPM are investigated by the Internal Affairs Division of the APD. The OPM staff will oversee the investigation. The OPM staff participate in all interviews and review all available evidence.

**Will I have more problems with the police if I file a complaint?**

The APD has strict rules that prohibit officers from retaliating against complainants.

**What if an officer did a good job and I want to give him or her a compliment?**

You can submit compliments to the OPM directly or with Internal Affairs at APD by calling (512) 974-8501 or by going to the APD website: [austintexas.gov/email/police3](http://austintexas.gov/email/police3).

**What if I think the police should have to pay me money because of what they did to me? Can the OPM help me with this?**

No, we can't. The OPM complaint process is an administrative process related to APD policy. There are no monetary or legal remedies from our complaint process. You may reach out to the City of Austin Legal Department at (512) 974-2268 to file a claim or you may seek advice from a private attorney.

**I have been charged with a crime. Will filing a complaint affect the criminal case against me?**

No. The complaint you file with us is completely separate from your criminal case. The OPM cannot advise or represent you on any legal matter.

**As a community member, how can I be supportive of the OPM?**

You can help us spread the word by inviting us to give presentations in your communities. You can visit the OPM website at [austinpolicemonitor.com](http://austinpolicemonitor.com) to learn more about how you can get involved.

