

The Police Review & Advisory Board was established by City Ordinance in 1984 to:

- Provide for citizen participation in reviewing Police Department policies, practices, and procedures;
- Provide a prompt, impartial and fair investigation of complaints brought by individuals, police officers upon whom a complaint has been brought, and employees of the Police Department; and
- Develop programs and strategies to promote positive police/community relations and to provide opportunities for expanded discussions, improved understanding, and innovative ways of resolving differences.

The Board consists of five civilians who are representative the City's racial, social, and economic composition.

*The Police Review & Advisory Board is a member of the **National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement***



Police Review & Advisory Board
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CAMBRIDGE POLICE REVIEW & ADVISORY BOARD



**To File a Complaint Concerning a
Cambridge Police Officer Call
617.349.6155 or visit
www.cambridgema.gov/prab**

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Police Review & Advisory Board?

The Police Review and Advisory Board is an independent civilian oversight agency that hears complaints and reviews policies, practices, and procedures of the Cambridge Police Department, making recommendations to the Police Commissioner, City Manager, and City Council. The Board was created by city ordinance to provide timely, fair, and impartial investigations of complaints brought by individuals against police officers. Police officers also have the right to file complaints with the Board against the Cambridge Police Department.

What types of complaints does the Police Review & Advisory Board investigate?

- ◆ Excessive use of force
- ◆ Use of discourteous or demeaning language
- ◆ Improper stop, arrest, search and seizure
- ◆ Inadequate investigation or improper police reports
- ◆ Discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, sex, religion, disability, or national origin or any other criteria defined in federal and state guidelines.
- ◆ Harassment
- ◆ Improper police procedures
- ◆ Improper traffic citation or towing of a car by the police

What happens once a complaint is submitted?

The process begins with a complaint being filed with the Police Review and Advisory Board. The Board employs its own staff, and works with the Professional Standards Unit of the Police Department to investigate all complaints. The Board then reviews the investigative report from the staff, and either orders a full investigation or dismisses the complaint. A full investigation includes interviews with both the complainant and police officer(s) and other relevant individuals. After a full investigation is completed, the Board may dismiss the complaint,

mediate, or order a hearing. Following a hearing, the Board will render a final decision. If the Board finds that there was a violation of policy or procedures, it will make a recommendation to the City Manager and the Police Commissioner about what action(s) should be taken.

How does someone submit a complaint?

Complaints may be filed with the staff of the Police Review & Advisory Board in person, by letter, or by telephone. In all cases, everyone making a complaint is required to provide signed statement describing what happened and the specific complaint. Complaints must be filed within 60 days of the incident.

If You Are Stopped by the Police...

There are factors that the police may take into consideration when observing you. Every situation is different and the officer may consider the following factors:

- ◆ If you are running and a crime has recently been reported in the area.
- ◆ If you are "hanging around" with people who are under police investigation.
- ◆ If you are near an area where a crime has just been reported and may have witnessed or participated in the crime.
- ◆ If you are in an area which the police believe to be abandoned or unoccupied, or are present on public or commercial property outside of appropriate norms.
- ◆ If you are acting in a manner which appears to be suspicious.
- ◆ If the police believe you are in possession of stolen property.
- ◆ If stopped while walking or driving your car, you refuse to answer police questions, or give false, evasive or contradictory information.
- ◆ If you match a suspect profile described to the police.
- ◆ If you use derogatory or offensive language, you may be saying the wrong thing at the wrong time.

While these things are taken into consideration when questioning you, the police must respect your right to refuse to answer questions that sound accusatory.

This information is based on guidelines established by the National Black Police Association.