

MENDOCINO COUNTY POLICY #16	PUBLIC COMPLAINTS CONCERNING COUNTY PERSONNEL
ADOPTED: July 7, 1987	ADOPTED BY: Minute Order

- A. This policy has been formulated and adopted by the Board of Supervisors to strike a meaningful balance between the public's right to criticize County personnel and the Board's interest in promoting efficient County government while, at the same time, protecting the professional reputation of employees and County department heads from reckless or untrue statements.
- B. Unsigned or anonymous letters of complaint have no probative value and will be disregarded with no further action taken by the Board of Supervisors.
1. Letters of Complaint Concerning an Appointed Department Head:
 - a. The Clerk of the Board shall send to the County Administrative Officer letters of complaint so that they may be reviewed for a resolution.
 - b. The County Administrative Officer shall investigate the complaint and discuss the complaint with the department head.
 - c. The County Administrative Officer shall report all meritorious complaints to the Personnel Committee (Government and Finance Committee) of the Board of Supervisors with information copies to all Board members. The Personnel Committee (Government and Finance Committee) may instruct the County Administrative Officer to work with the department head toward resolution of the complaint or the Personnel Committee (Government and Finance Committee) may become directly involved in complaint resolution.
 - d. In the Personnel Committee's (Government and Finance Committee's) discretion, it may refer the complaint to the entire Board for resolution.
 - e. If the Board as a whole hears the complaint, it shall do so in closed session under the personnel exception to the Brown Act. If the appointed department head is present, the hearing may be open or closed at the discretion of the department head.
 - f. After a decision is made, an information letter shall be sent to the complainant by the County Administrative Officer.
 2. Letters of Complaint Concerning Elected Officers/ Department Heads:

The sequence for handling letters of complaint for elected officers/department heads shall follow steps B.1.a through B.1.d above. However, should the Board of Supervisors, as a whole, desire to hear the complaint, it must do so in open session. Step B.1.f above will also pertain.
 3. Letters of Complaint for Non-Department Head Employees:

The Clerk of the Board shall refer all non-department head employee complaints to the supervising department head and advise the County Administrative Officer of the referral. Step B.1.f above will also pertain with department head response and a copy to the County Administrative Officer.

4. Verbal Complaints:

a. Made to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors:

Clerk of the Board is instructed to inform a person lodging a complaint that it must be in writing and signed by the person making the complaint before being accepted. The complaint will then be processed according to the guidelines set forth in sections 1, 2 or 3 above.

b. Made During a Public Meeting of the Board of Supervisors:

The Chairman of the Board will inform the speaker that a personnel complaint will not be accepted by the Board of Supervisors except in written form and signed by the person making the complaint. The complaint will then be processed according to the guidelines set forth in sections 1, 2, or 3 above.

A response will be given to the complainant.