



# Independent Police Conduct Authority

## Complaints about Police

Whaia te pono, kia puawai ko te tika  
Seek the truth, that justice may prevail

# Complaints about Police

The Independent Police Conduct Authority is an independent body that keeps watch over Police.

We are **not** part of Police – under the law, **we are fully independent**. We conduct our own investigations, and we are headed by a Judge.

If you have a complaint about Police, you can come to us.

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## Who are we?

The Independent Police Conduct Authority is a civilian organisation, independent of Police and headed by a Judge. We are an 'Independent Crown Entity'. This means that, although we receive Government funding through Vote: Justice, neither the government nor Police can influence how we deal with complaints or run our investigations.

We have a team of Case Resolution Officers, as well as teams that conduct and report on our independent investigations. Our Investigation teams are made up of highly experienced people who have worked in a range of law enforcement roles in New Zealand and other Commonwealth countries. They have been selected for their experience, ability and integrity.

## What does 'Independent' mean?

Being 'independent' means we make findings based on our own judgment of the facts and the law.

We don't answer to Police, the Government or anyone else over those findings. In this way, our independence is similar to the independence of a Court.

## What can you complain about?

We consider complaints about:

- Police misconduct
- Police neglect of duty
- Police practices, policies and procedures

We also consider incidents of death and serious injury involving Police. Police have to tell us about these incidents and we consider them even if we don't receive a complaint.

## What are 'misconduct' and 'neglect of duty'?

Both 'misconduct' and 'neglect of duty' can include a wide range of incidents.

Examples of 'misconduct' may include use of unreasonable force, dishonesty, perjury, threats or harassment, unlawful arrest, and a range of other actions.

Examples of neglect of duty may include a failure to respond to or investigate an offence or to prosecute someone.

## How can you complain?

You can make complaints online at [www.ipca.govt.nz](http://www.ipca.govt.nz).

This is the preferred option as the form will guide you through the information we need in order to properly consider your complaint and determine the most suitable way of resolving it.

You can also download a complaint form from the website.

Other ways to complain include:

- Writing a letter or email to us.
- Visiting a police station and asking to make a complaint. You may be able to resolve minor matters directly with Police, but you are entitled to make a complaint to us.
- Phoning our Service Centre on **0800 503 728** for further assistance or advice.

## What happens to your complaint?

We receive about 2500 complaints each year, ranging from very serious matters to minor ones. We allocate our resources to ensure complaints are addressed in an appropriate manner taking into account the seriousness of the issue.

This means that:

- For the most serious complaints or incidents, we will assign our own staff to carry out an independent investigation
- For other serious complaints, we ask Police to investigate, but we oversee the Police investigation to make sure it is carried out properly
- In other cases we will work with the Police to ensure the grievance is properly addressed.

We can also refuse to accept a complaint – for example if it is very old, very minor, or outside our jurisdiction.

## Why do Police sometimes investigate?

Some complaints are referred to Police for investigation. There are three main reasons for this:

- Under current laws, only Police can lay charges, so if you make a complaint alleging that Police have committed a crime, it's appropriate that Police investigate.
- Our resources are limited.
- Police have an internal division known as Professional Conduct which is responsible for internal disciplinary investigations.

## We'll stay in touch

If you make a complaint, we'll get in touch to confirm we've received it.

We may seek further details from you, and we may also seek information from Police.

Once we've assessed your complaint we will get in touch to explain our decision.

Then, as long as we are dealing with the complaint, we'll stay in regular contact to keep you informed.

If you've made a complaint and want information about progress, you can contact our Service Centre on **0800 503 728**.

## How long does it take?

Some complaints are resolved within days or weeks; others that are serious, and require investigation, can take many months.

A small number may take longer. We are working to achieve more speedy resolution of complaints, but the time taken can depend on matters outside our control, such as Court cases.

## What if I am dissatisfied?

If you are unhappy with the outcome of your complaint you can write to the Authority advising the reasons for this. We will review the matter and let you know what, if any, further action will be taken.

## Contact us

Independent Police Conduct Authority

**w** [www.ipca.govt.nz](http://www.ipca.govt.nz)

**p** 0800 503 728

**p** 04 499 2050

**f** 04 499 2053

**e** [enquiries@ipca.govt.nz](mailto:enquiries@ipca.govt.nz)

PO Box 25221, Wellington 6146



# IPCA

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