

**Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer**  
**Lesson 15 — Community Relations and**  
**Public Fire and Life-Safety Education**

**Assignment Sheet 15-2**  
**Respond to Scenarios About**  
**Concerns of Citizens**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**References**

*Fire and Emergency Services Company Officer*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, p. 347  
NFPA 1021, 4.3.2

**Introduction**

The term citizen concerns can most often be interpreted as citizen complaints. Citizens often have concerns based upon a perception of something the organization, service provider, or municipality has done – or not done. Issues of this nature may involve something directly under the control of the emergency service organization such as open burning regulations, inspections, or weed abatement requirements. Other issues may involve something over which the fire or emergency organization has no jurisdiction – parking regulations, street signage, or even garbage pickup. These concerns are most often brought to the emergency service organization simply because personnel represent authority figures in the community and are viewed as representatives of the jurisdiction as a whole. Regardless of how or why a citizen complains to the fire and emergency services, company officers must be prepared to deal with these concerns in friendly, courteous, and professional manner.

**Directions**

Review the scenario and the two Anytown Fire Department policies below. You are to assume that you are the company officer at Station 5 and were on duty the night of the incident.

Using the policies provided, S.O.P. 601.01, Handling Citizen Complaints, and S.O.P. 750.16 , Good Neighbor Activities, as guidelines, complete the following questions and develop a strategy for addressing the citizen concern.

## Scenario

You are the company officer at Station 5. Your neighborhood is a quiet area with mostly retired residents. Last Sunday evening you invited several off-duty firefighters and their families to the station to celebrate the retirement of your driver/operator. You grilled steaks and everyone played volleyball. One of your firefighters set up a CD player on the patio and played music softly during dinner and volleyball. The get-together lasted from 1700 to 2100. All cooking and volleyball equipment was cleaned and put away by 2115 hrs. At 2133 hrs Engine 5 was dispatched to a vehicle fire, and returned at 2230 hrs. On Wednesday morning a citizen who lives behind the station comes to you angry about the activities at the station on Sunday evening. He states that there was loud noise and music until midnight and that he and the other neighbors couldn't sleep. He insists that you take care of the problem or he is going straight to the chief.

1. What is the problem?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Why is the neighbor upset?

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3. In your opinion, what would be his desired solution?

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4. Can you resolve the problem?

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5. What is your strategy for addressing the concern? How will you create a win-win situation?

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6. How will you follow-up?

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<p><b>COMMUNITY RELATIONS</b></p> <p>Handling Citizen Complaints</p>	<p><b>ANYTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p>S.O.P. 601.01 09/03 Approval: EJN Page 1 of 1</p>
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**PURPOSE:**

To define and describe the expected response and action to be taken by Anytown Fire Department personnel when handling citizen complaints or concerns about the department's services, operations, or staff behavior.

**SCOPE:**

This procedure applies to all personnel who are employed or represent the Anytown Fire Department. The supervisor, company officer, manager or administrator for the unit or individual in question are responsible for the initiation of action regarding these inquiries and its resolution.

**PROCEDURE:**

It is the responsibility of the company officer to initiate action on citizen complaints or concerns about department operations and staff behavior. When possible, the company officer shall resolve the problem at the station level.

Problems or issues that cannot be resolved to the citizen's satisfaction shall be referred to the Assistant Chief for that shift or the Assistant Chief of Administration.

A resolution shall be identified within three (3) working days following receipt of the initial complaint or concern.

The citizen shall be treated with respect in a professional manner by all department staff working on the issue.

<b>FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS</b>  Good Neighbor Activities	<b>ANYTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS</b>  S.O.P. 750.16 07/04 Approval: EJN Page 1 of 1
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**PURPOSE:**

To define and describe the expected behavior of fire personnel assigned to any City of Anytown facility. Anytown Fire Department desires to implement the practice of being a good neighbor to all of those with who we share the neighborhood.

**SCOPE:**

This procedure applies to all personnel who are employed or represent the Anytown Fire Department. The supervisor, company officer, manager or senior administrator for the fire station, facility, or other location shall be responsible for ensuring that proper conduct is practiced by all assigned personnel at all times.

**PROCEDURE:**

The company officer shall be responsible for ensuring the activities at each station do not inappropriately interfere with the health and peace of the neighbors in that area.

Any outdoor activities or recreation shall be limited to those that do not disturb the peace of the neighborhood.

All outdoor recreational activities shall cease at 2100. Indoor recreational activities may occur at anytime. However, all doors shall be closed after 2100 hrs when loud indoor activities are occurring. In no case are indoor activities permitted after 2300 hrs.

Persons who are not employees of the Anytown Fire Department are not permitted in or on the facility location prior to 0600 hrs or after 2300 hrs. This provision explicitly includes family member of employees who are quartered there.

Loud music is not permitted at anytime. The company officer or supervisor has the discretion regarding the sound level of the music that is present.

Dispatch tone alerts and alarm notifications are to adjusted so that they are loud enough to be heard but not intrusive to neighboring homes and businesses.

Noise associated with the performance of maintenance of fire equipment may occur at any time. Care should be practiced, by closing doors and windows in the facility, when utilizing powered tools before 0600 hrs and after 2100 hrs.