

68B.32B Complaint procedures.

1. Any person may file a complaint alleging that a candidate, committee, person holding a state office in the executive branch of state government, employee of the executive branch of state government, or other person has committed a violation of chapter 68A or rules adopted by the board. Any person may file a complaint alleging that a person holding a state office in the executive branch of state government, an employee of the executive branch of state government, or a lobbyist or a client of a lobbyist of the executive branch of state government has committed a violation of this chapter or rules adopted by the board. The board shall prescribe and provide forms for this purpose. A complaint must include the name and address of the complainant, a statement of the facts believed to be true that form the basis of the complaint, including the sources of information and approximate dates of the acts alleged, and a certification by the complainant under penalty of perjury that the facts stated to be true are true to the best of the complainant's knowledge.

2. The board staff shall review the complaint to determine if the complaint is sufficient as to form. If the complaint is deficient as to form, the complaint shall be returned to the complainant with a statement of the deficiency and an explanation describing how the deficiency may be cured. If the complaint is sufficient as to form, the complaint shall be referred for legal review.

3. Unless the chairperson of the board concludes that immediate notification would prejudice a preliminary investigation or subject the complainant to an unreasonable risk, the board shall mail a copy of the complaint to the subject of the complaint within three working days of the acceptance of the complaint. If a determination is made by the chairperson not to mail a copy of the complaint to the subject of the complaint within the three working days time period, the board shall approve and establish the time and conditions under which the subject will be informed of the filing and contents of the complaint.

4. Upon completion of legal review, the chairperson of the board shall be advised whether, in the opinion of the legal advisor, the complaint states an allegation which is legally sufficient. A legally sufficient allegation must allege all of the following:

a. Facts that would establish a violation of a provision of this chapter, chapter 68A, or rules adopted by the board.

b. Facts that would establish that the conduct providing the basis for the complaint occurred within three years of the complaint.

c. Facts that would establish that the subject of the complaint is a party subject to the jurisdiction of the board.

5. After receiving an evaluation of the legal sufficiency of the complaint, the chairperson shall refer the complaint to the board for a formal determination by the board of the legal sufficiency of the allegations contained in the complaint.

6. If the board determines that none of the allegations contained in the complaint are legally sufficient, the complaint shall be dismissed. The complainant shall be sent a notice of dismissal stating the reason or reasons for the dismissal. If a copy of the complaint was sent to the subject of the complaint, a copy of the notice shall be sent to the subject of the complaint. If the board determines that any allegation contained in the complaint is legally sufficient, the complaint shall be referred to the board staff for investigation of any legally sufficient allegations.

7. Notwithstanding subsections 1 through 6, the board may, on its own motion and without the filing of a complaint by another person, initiate investigations into matters that the board believes may be subject to the board's jurisdiction. This section does not preclude persons from providing information to the board for possible board-initiated investigation instead of filing a complaint.

8. The purpose of an investigation by the board's staff is to determine whether there is probable cause to believe that there has been a violation of this chapter or of rules adopted by the board. To facilitate the conduct of investigations, the board may issue and seek enforcement of subpoenas requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and subpoenas requiring the production of books, papers, records, and other real evidence relating to the matter under investigation. Upon the request of the board, an appropriate county attorney or the attorney general shall assist the staff of the board in its investigation.

9. If the board determines on the basis of an investigation by board staff that there is probable cause to believe the existence of facts that would establish a violation of this chapter, or of rules adopted by the board, the board may issue a statement of charges and notice of a contested case proceeding to the complainant and to the person who is the subject of the complaint, in the manner provided for the issuance of statements of charges under chapter 17A. If the board determines on the basis of an investigation by staff that there is no probable cause to believe that a violation has occurred, the board shall close the investigation, dismiss any related complaint, and the subject of the complaint shall be notified of the dismissal. If the investigation originated from a complaint filed by a person other than the board, the person making the complaint shall also be notified of the dismissal.

10. At any stage during the investigation or after the initiation of a contested case proceeding, the board may approve a settlement regarding an alleged violation. Terms of a settlement shall be reduced to writing and be available for public inspection. An informal settlement may provide for any remedy specified in section 68B.32D. However, the board shall not approve a settlement unless the board determines that the terms of the settlement are in the public interest and are consistent with the purposes of this chapter and rules of the board. In addition, the board may authorize board staff to seek informal voluntary compliance in routine matters brought to the attention of the board or its staff.

11. A complaint shall be a public record, but some or all of the contents may be treated as confidential under section 22.7, subsection 18, to the extent necessary under subsection 3 of this section. Information informally reported to the board and board staff which results in a board-initiated investigation shall be a public record but may be treated as confidential information consistent with the provisions of section 22.7, subsection 18. If the complainant, the person who provides information to the board, or the person who is the subject of an investigation publicly discloses the existence of an investigation, the board may publicly confirm the existence of the disclosed formal complaint or investigation and, in the board's discretion, make the complaint or the informal referral public, as well as any other documents that were issued by the board to any party to the investigation. However, investigative materials may be furnished to the appropriate law enforcement authorities by the board at any time. Upon the commencement of a contested case proceeding by the board, all investigative material relating to that proceeding shall be made available to the subject of the proceeding. The entire record of any contested case proceeding initiated under this section shall be a public record.

12. Board records used to achieve voluntary compliance to resolve discrepancies and deficiencies shall not be confidential unless otherwise required by law.

93 Acts, ch 163, § 16; 94 Acts, ch 1092, §8