

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

COMPLAINT PRIORITIZATION & REFERRAL GUIDELINES*

COMPLAINTS IN CATEGORIES 1 & 2 ARE REFERRED TO DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION

CATEGORY 1 • URGENT

- Acts of serious patient/consumer harm, great bodily injury, or death
- Mental or physical impairment of licensee with potential for public harm
- Practicing while under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- Repeated allegations of drug/alcohol abuse
- Narcotic/prescription drug theft; drug diversion; other unlawful possession
- Sexual misconduct with a patient
- Physical/mental abuse of a patient
- Over-prescribing
- Gross negligence/incompetence resulting in serious harm/injury
- Media/politically sensitive cases

CATEGORY 2 • HIGH

- Prescribing/dispensing without authority
- Unlicensed practice/unlicensed activity
- Aiding and abetting unlicensed activity
- Criminal violations including but not limited to prescription forgery, selling or using fraudulent documents and/or transcripts, possession of narcotics, major financial fraud, financial elder abuse, insurance fraud, etc.
- Exam subversion where exam is compromised
- Mandatory peer review reporting (B&P 805)
- Law enforcement standby/security (subject to staff availability)

COMPLAINTS IN CATEGORIES 3 & 4 ARE INVESTIGATED BY BOARD/BUREAU STAFF

CATEGORY 3 • ROUTINE

- General unprofessional conduct and/or general negligence/incompetence resulting in no injury or minor harm/injury (non-intentional act, non-life threatening)
- Subsequent arrest notifications (no immediate public threat)
- Exam subversion (individual cheating where exam is not compromised)
- Medical malpractice reporting (B&P 801) cases unless evaluated as category 1 or 2
- Serving subpoenas for hearings and for records (non DOI investigations)
- Patient abandonment
- False/misleading advertising (not related to unlicensed activity or criminal activity)
- Applicant misconduct

CATEGORY 4 • ROUTINE

- Unsanitary conditions
- Project abandonment
- Failure to release medical records
- Recordkeeping violations
- Continuing education violations
- Declaration and record collection (e.g., licensee statements, medical records, arrest and conviction records, employment records)
- Complaints of offensive behavior or language (e.g., poor bedside manner, rude, abrupt, etc.)
- Quality-of-service complaints
- Complaints against licensee on probation that do not meet category 1 or 2
- Anonymous complaints unless Board is able to corroborate that it meets category 1 or 2
- Non-jurisdictional issues

*Complaint prioritization is statutory for some clients and supersedes these Guidelines. See Business and Professions Code sections 2220.05 (Medical Board/Board of Podiatric Medicine) and 4875.1 (Veterinary Medical Board).

(Rev 12/2017)