THOROUGH INVESTIGATIONS WILL INCLUDE

1. Physical and documentary evidence
2. Interviews of victims and witnesses
3. Other corroborating/disproving evidence
4. Involvement of other regulatory authorities who can assist
5. Documentation of each step taken during the fact-finding

QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED

1. Who was present?
2. Who saw, heard or overheard the alleged incident?
3. What did the person see, say or overhear?
4. Exactly what happened?
5. How did it happen?
6. When did it occur?
7. Is there reason to believe it could not have occurred?
8. Could it have been an accident?
9. Was it immediately reported?

THE REPORT

1. A timely and thorough report is important to investigation and substantiation of an incident. It is:
   a. A permanent record of the investigator’s actions, observations and discoveries,
   b. A basic reference for the incident,
   c. Information about the actions taken concerning the incident,
   d. A basis for deciding whether further action is necessary,
   e. A method to communicate the findings of the incident to the Agency or other interested agencies,
   f. The only information that a reader may have about the incident that can also be evaluated and analyzed to detect and identify patterns of rule violation.

A REPORT IDENTIFIES:

1. The violation committed,
2. The perpetrator of the violation,
3. The identity of the victim,
4. The available evidence, and
5. The witness to the incident.
REPORT INFORMATION INCLUDES FIVE QUESTIONS

1. **Who is involved?**
   Includes persons who are discovered to be connected in any way to the incident:
   - Consumer
   - Complainant
   - Suspect/Accused
   - Witness
   - Other people with first hand knowledge

   Identify each individual to reduce confusion:
   - Legal name and nicknames
   - Title, position, place of employment
   - Gender, race, date of birth
   - Full address and telephone number

2. **What happened?**
   - Describe the incident precisely and accurately.
   - Record observable facts.
   - Record statements of witnesses.

3. **When did it happen?**
   - Attempt to establish the time and date of incident.

4. **Where did it happen?**
   - Include the specific location of all persons and things that may be related to the incident.
   - Include specific environmental conditions such as lightning, noise, location and types of furnishings, weather conditions, clothing, etc.

5. **How did it happen?**
   - What means or actions were used in the incident?
   - What conversations took place?

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BASIC PRINCIPLES OF GOOD REPORT WRITING

- Report factual information – e.g., “I saw”.
- Report information gained through the physical senses – sight, smell, taste, hearing, and touch.
- Be aware of “feelings” that may destroy objective descriptions; strong feelings can cause the writer to seek evidence to support his/her feelings and reject evidence that will not support them.
- Make distinctions between fact and hearsay, fact and opinion, and fact and conclusions.
- Be clear about the meaning of words; avoid jargon.
- Clarify all abbreviations (e.g., SOB-short of breath).
- Proofread your report for accuracy; rewrite as necessary.

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2 Basic Principles, NEO-Principles of Investigation