



Policy: Municipal Complaint Policy

Policy Number: CP-A-5.2

Effective Date: June 10, 2019

Revised Date:

PURPOSE:

The Municipal Complaint Policy is intended to provide a consistent and uniform process to respond to program and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public. The policy will assist the Municipality in continuing to provide excellent service to the public and will contribute to the continuous improvement of operations.

The following policy establishes guidelines and standards for the efficient handling and resolution of complaints made toward the Municipality in order to address concerns raised and improve services.

SCOPE:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, facility, or staff member.

This policy does not address:

- Inquiries
- Request for service
- Feedback
- Compliments
- Request for accommodation
- Criticisms or anonymous complaints
- Complaints about non-municipal services;
- Issues addressed by legislation, or an existing municipal by-law, policy or procedure
- A decision by Council, Committee or Local Board
- Internal employee complaints
- Matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, etc.

For example, a request made to the Municipality for a specific service such as repair to street surface, by-law or parking infractions, damage to municipal property, or garbage pick-up do not qualify as a complaint under this policy.

This policy does not apply to outside boards (e.g. Public Library Board), Closed Meeting Investigations, complaints made by employees, contractors, or volunteers working on

behalf of the Municipality, or complaints about members of Council.

TYPES OF COMPLAINTS:

Informal Complaints

It is encouraged that individuals and municipal staff work to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal complaints. Informal complaints may be made in person, by phone, letter or email.

It is the responsibility of municipal staff to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal complaints and identify opportunities to improve municipal services.

Formal Complaints

A formal complaint is generated when an informal resolution cannot be successfully achieved. This will result in a file generated, investigation, and decision. Appendix A of this policy is the formal Municipal Complaint Form.

FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Filing a Complaint

The complainant must fill out a complaint form (attached as Appendix A) which shall include the following information:

- Contact details of the complainant
- Type of complaint
- Details of the complaint (location, employee involved, resolution requested, enclosures, date complaint submitted)
- Signature and date

Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

Acknowledgement

Formal complaints shall be forwarded to the appropriate Department Head or designate to investigate.

The Department Head or designate shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within seven (7) calendar days.

Investigation

The Department Head or designate will assess if the complaint falls within this policy and review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so may:

- Review relevant municipal and provincial legislation;

- Review the Municipality's relevant policies and procedures;
- Interview employees;
- Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations.
- Contact the complainant to clarify the complaint, if necessary. The complaint may be terminated at this point if a resolution is possible, or if it does not meet the definition of a complaint.

See also below for Records Management and Privacy Information.

Decision

A decision shall be made within thirty (30) calendar days upon acknowledgement of the complaint. The Department Head or designate, shall provide a written response outlining the results of the investigation into the complaint.

The response shall note whether the complaint was substantiated and include any actions the Municipality may take as a result of the complaint.

If the Department Head is unable to provide a response within thirty (30) calendar days, they shall notify the complainant of the delay and provide an estimate of when a response will be provided.

Appeal

Once the Municipality has communicated the decision, there is no appeal process at the municipal level.

In the event complaints cannot be resolved through the Municipality's complaint process, the complaint may be submitted to the Municipal Ombudsman.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND PRIVACY

All records relating to the complaint shall be maintained in accordance with the Municipality's record retention schedule.

During the complaints process, all Municipal employees shall adhere to all applicable legislation regarding privacy in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). Complainants should be aware that certain circumstances may identify them during an investigation.