



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MULMUR

COMPLAINT POLICY

Adopted by Council on April 6, 2016

The Township of Mulmur is committed to providing a high standard of service to the public in an accountable and transparent manner and this policy will ensure that all complaints will be dealt with in an expedient and fair manner. Contacting us about your complaint is the first step towards successful complaint remediation.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This policy does not offend the Strategic Plan.

Scope:

This policy applies to both verbal and written complaints of either an informal or formal nature.

Application:

This policy applies to all Township staff, including committee and board members, while performing their duties on behalf of the Township.

General Guidelines:

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about the service, actions, or lack of action relating to Township policies, processes or procedures. Examples of a complaint include (but are not limited to): a perceived failure to do something agreed to do; a failure to observe policy or procedures; an error; unfair or discourteous actions/statements by staff; etc.

A complaint is not:

- a request for service;
- to notify the municipality that a scheduled service was not provided on time;
- a general enquiry or specific request for information regarding municipal service;
- an opinion or feedback, comment and expression of interest in a program or service;
- a suggestion or idea submitted with the aim of improving services, programs, products or processes;
- a difference in opinion with a Council decision, policy, ruling or by-law;
- a situation as a result of inclement weather, a natural disaster or state of emergency.

A Complainant is the individual filing the complaint with the Township. Anyone personally affected may submit a complaint which will be reviewed in accordance with this policy and staff will make every reasonable effort to keep the complainant's identity private. Anonymous complaints will not be considered.

Complaints will be dealt with through the appropriate designated procedure if they fall under their own specific legislation, which may include but not limited to:

- a) *Assessment Act*
- b) Council Code of Conduct
- c) *Planning Act*
- d) Criminal Code of Canada
- e) *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*
- f) *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- g) Other Policies
- h) Lack of Jurisdiction
- i) Matter is already pending

A complaint must be made within sixty (60) days of the alleged infraction.

Informal Complaint Process

An informal complaint may be written or verbal and will generally be dealt with by front line staff and/or management for consideration or remedial action. Informal complaints may or may not be recorded. An informal complaint that cannot be resolved, at any time may enter the formal complaint process, at which time it must be in writing.

The Complainant may address the behaviour or activity (action or non-action) through direct contact with the staff person and/or their supervisor, as follows:

- Advise staff person and/or their supervisor that the behaviour or activity appears to contravene established Township policies and procedures, legislation, or is unethical;
- Discuss with the staff person and/or their supervisor to work towards an amicable solution.
- Document the incidents including dates, times, locations, other persons present, and any other relevant information; and
- Consider the need to pursue the matter in accordance with the Formal Complaint Process.

The Informal Complaint Process is the most expedient and simplified process for complaint remediation. Individuals are encouraged to pursue the informal complaint process as the first means of remedying a complaint that they believe violates established policies or procedures, legislation, or is unethical on its face. However, this process is not a precondition or prerequisite to pursuing a formal complaint procedure.

The Township is committed to resolving issues or concerns before they become Formal Complaints in order to immediately identify opportunities to improve municipal services.

Formal Complaint Process

The Formal Complaint Process may be necessary if the Informal Complaint Process was unsuccessful. This process is designed to deal with complaints as expediently as possible but the process is more comprehensive and time consuming. All formal complaints shall be made in writing and shall be dated by an identifiable individual who has been personally affected by the alleged infraction.

The complaint shall include:

- the full name and contact information of the individual lodging the complaint;
- details of the concern or complaint including reasonable and probable grounds for the allegation
- the date and location of the behaviour or activity
- the names of any other persons who may have been involved in or witnessed the behaviour or activity
- desired outcome or preferred resolution

Complainants have a right to expect that their complaint will be investigated confidentially and the Township will take every reasonable precaution to ensure confidentiality; however, the identity will be made known to those who need to know in the process of investigating and resolving their complaint and where it may be required by law.

STEPS

1. The written complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate Department Head who will document, investigate, remediate and respond to the Complainant on his/her finding.

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome:



2. The written complaint and all corresponding information regarding the investigation will be forwarded to the CAO/Clerk who will document, investigate further if necessary, remediate if possible and respond to the Complainant on his/her finding.

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome:



3. The written complaint and all corresponding information regarding the investigation will be forwarded to Council for their consideration.

If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome:



4. The complainant will be given the contact information for the Ontario Ombudsman for resolution.