

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN

Schedule "A"

Complaint Process Policy

PURPOSE

This policy is intended to enable the Township of South Algonquin to promptly and effectively address program and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public. The policy will assist the Township in providing excellent service to the public, and contribute to continuous improvement of operations. The Township strives to reduce customer dissatisfaction by:

1. Providing a timely and accurate response to complaints; and,
2. Using complaints as an opportunity to improve program and service delivery issues.

A complaint is distinct from:

- a request for service made on behalf of a citizen for a specific service, or to notify the Township that a scheduled service was not provided on time.
- a general inquiry or specific request for information regarding municipal service.
- an opinion or feedback, comment and expression of interest in a program or service.
- an expression of approval or compliment for municipal staff member, program, product or process.
- a suggestion or idea submitted by a customer with the aim of improving services, programs, products or processes.

The policy is not for complaints:

- regarding staff members that are employed by a service provider contracted by the Township shall be subject to the policies of that service provider.
- issues addressed by legislation, or an existing municipal by-law, policy or procedure.
- a decision of Council or a decision of a committee of Council.
- internal employee complaints.
- matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, etc.

DEFINITIONS

- a. "Complainant" means the individual filing the complaint with the Township;
- b. "Complaint" means an issue or concern raised with a municipal program, service, or operation that is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at the point of service delivery and for which the complainant submits their concerns to the Township in accordance with this policy;

- c. "Council" means the Council of the Township of South Algonquin;
- d. "Employee" means the employee of the Township;
- e. "Township" means the Township of South Algonquin;
- f. "Ombudsman" means the Ontario Office of the Ombudsman;

FRONTLINE RESOLUTION

It is the responsibility of the complainant to attempt to resolve concerns by dealing with Township employee(s) directly involved with the issue where appropriate.

It is the responsibility of all Township employees to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become complaints, and identify opportunities to improve municipal services.

PROCESS FOR FILING A COMPLAINT

Where frontline resolution cannot be achieved, complaints should be submitted to the CAO/Clerk Treasurer or designate in writing and include:

- a. The name, phone number and mailing address of the individual submitting the complaint.
- b. The nature of the complaint including the:
 - i. Background leading to the issue(s);
 - ii. Date(s), time(s), and location(s) of any incident(s); and,
 - iii. Identify the type of incident;
 - iv. Name(s) of any employee(s) previously contacted regarding the issue(s);
- c. Any action(s) being requested of the Township.

Receipt and Acknowledgement

The CAO/Clerk Treasurer shall log the complaint and forward a copy to the Department Head or designate. Within seven (7) business days of receipt of the complaint, the CAO/Clerk Treasurer shall acknowledge to the complainant in writing that the complaint has been received.

Investigation

A Department Head may not delegate the authority to investigate a complaint to an employee who is or may be named in the complaint.

If a complaint is made against the Department Head, the CAO/Clerk Treasurer or designate shall conduct the investigation.

If a complaint is made against the CAO/Clerk Treasurer, the Mayor shall consult with Council and may designate the municipal solicitor, or other qualified individual at arms-length from the Township, to investigate.

The designated investigator shall review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so may:

- Review relevant municipal and provincial legislation;
- Review the Township's relevant policies and procedures;

- Review any existing file documents;
- Interview employees or member of the public involved in the issue;
- Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations; or,
- The Department Head may, at their discretion, notify Council of an open complaint investigation for information purposes.

Decision

Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of a complaint, the Department Head shall provide a response in writing to the complainant.

The response shall include:

- Whether the complaint was substantiated,
- If the complaint is not substantiated, provide reason(s) for their decision; and,
- Any actions the Township has or will 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.

Record

The Department Head shall file a copy of the complaint and resolution with the CAO/Clerk Treasurer. The CAO/Clerk Treasurer shall maintain a file of the complaint in accordance with the Township's records retention by-law. If a municipal employee was the subject of the complaint, a copy of the record shall be retained in their personnel file.

Reporting

The CAO/Clerk Treasurer shall provide a report to the Council on an annual basis outlining the complaints received and the outcome achieved.

APPEAL PROCESS

Once the Township has communicated the decision to the complainant, there is no appeal process at the municipal level.

NON-COMPLIANCE

Non-compliance with this complaint policy may result in the complaint being filed with the Ontario Ombudsman for investigation.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy shall be reviewed every term of Council.

PROCESS

CAO/CLERK TREASURER:

- receives written complaint
- logs complaint
- forwards to appropriate department head
- acknowledges receipt to complainant within 7 days

DEPARTMENT HEAD/MAYOR:

- investigate the complaint
- make a decision
- notify the complainant of the outcome within 30 days of the filing of the complaint
- file a copy of the decision with the CAO/Clerk Treasurer

CAO/CLERK TREASURER:

- file a copy of the decision
- report to Human Resources and Administration Committee annually



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN

Schedule "B"

Complaint Process Policy
INCIDENT FORM

Date: _____ Time: _____

Information Received by:

Complainant Name:

Address: _____

Contact Information: Telephone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Description/Type of Complaint: _____

Location of Complaint: _____

Referred to:

(Department/Individual) If referred to another Department, copy this report to the
CAO/Clerk Treasurer)

Action Taken:

Date: _____

_____ Office use only:
Resolution: Yes # _____ No

CAO: follow up not required response letter sent pending investigation
/insurance

After complaint is addressed, place original in Front Office- complaint binder.