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MUNICIPAL COMPLAINT POLICY

DEPARTMENT	CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	POLICY NUMBER	35.15
EFFECTIVE DATE	December 22, 2015	LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY	Municipal Act
APPROVED BY:	RES 2015-567		

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PURPOSE

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

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

DEFINITION

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, facility, or staff member, where a citizen believes that the municipality has not provided a service experience to the customer's satisfaction at the point of service delivery and a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

A complaint is distinct from:

- a request for service made on behalf of a citizen for a specific service, or 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
- 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 municipality 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; or,
- internal employee complaints
- matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, etc.

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

Filing the Complaint

Where frontline resolution cannot be achieved, complaints should be submitted to the Clerk's Department or designate, on the form attached as Schedule "A". All information must be completed.

Receipt and Acknowledgement

The Clerk 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 Clerk shall acknowledge to the complainant in writing that the complaint has received in the form attached as Schedule "B".

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 Chief Administrative Officer or designate shall conduct the investigation.

If a complaint is made against the Chief Administrative Officer, the Mayor shall consult with Council and may designate the municipal solicitor, or other qualified individual at arms length from the municipality, 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 municipality'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 municipality has or will take as a result of the complaint.
- If the Designated Officer 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 Clerk. The Clerk shall maintain a file of the complaint in accordance with the municipality'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

Semi annually the Clerk shall provide a report to the Administration and Finance Committee outlining the complaints received and outcome on the form attached as Schedule "C"

APPEAL PROCESS

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

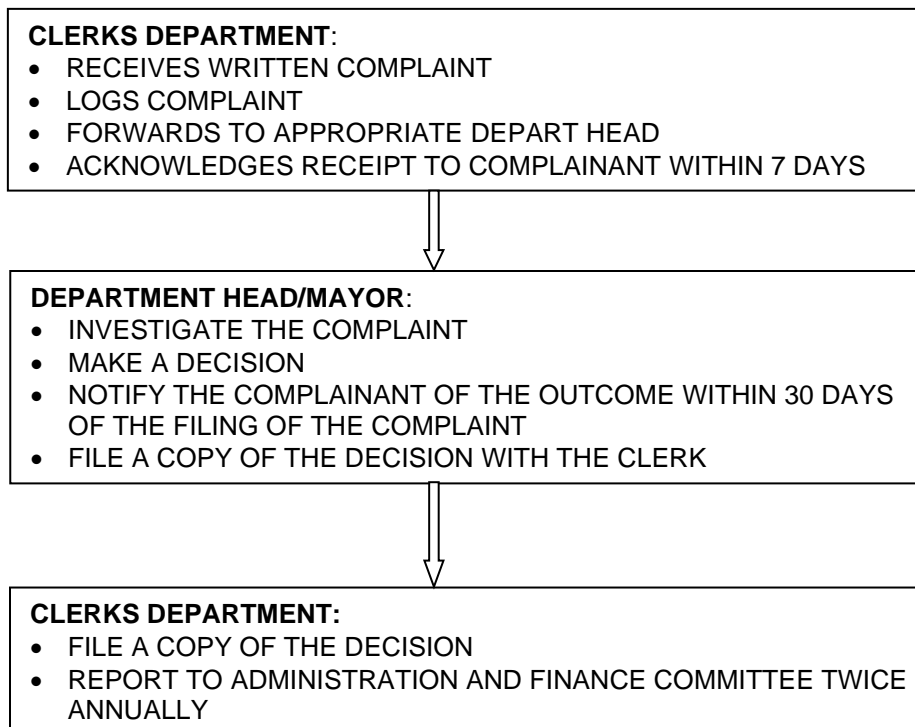
NON-COMPLIANCE

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



<i>How do you suggest the situation be improved or complaint resolved?</i>			
OFFICE USE ONLY			
COMPLAINT #			
RECEIVED BY		DATE	
FORWARDED TO		DATE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgement Letter Date sent: _____ Staff name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional correspondence Date sent: _____ Staff name: _____		
ACTION TAKEN			
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Decision Letter Date sent: _____ Staff name: _____	Copies filed with Clerk <input type="checkbox"/> Initial complaint <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgement letter <input type="checkbox"/> Additional correspondence <input type="checkbox"/> Final Decision letter		

***Thank you for taking the time to express your concern(s).
 We will provide a response within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving your complaint.
 If you have any questions about this process, please contact the
 Clerk 519-848-3620 ex 4227 or kwallace@wellington-north.com***

SCHEDULE "B" ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMPLAINT



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Plan to
Simply Explore.
www.simplyexplore.ca

INSERT DATE

NAME
ADDRESS

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. _____

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns regarding XXXXXX. Your written complaint was received by the municipality on INSERT DATE COMPLAINT RECEIVED

We will provide a response within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving your complaint.

If you have any questions regarding the process, please do not hesitate to contact myself at PHONE: EMAIL: or Karren Wallace, Clerk at 519-848-3620 ext 4227 or kwallace@wellington-north.com

Yours truly

Karren Wallace, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk