



The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh

Policy Manual

Policy Number: [Keywords]
Effective Date: Click here to enter a date.
Supersedes: Click or tap here to enter text.
Approval: Click or tap here to enter text.

Subject: **Public Complaint Policy**

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent and uniform process to respond to complaints received from members of the public regarding their dissatisfaction with programs, facilities, services, employees and/or operational procedures of The Corporation of the Town of Tecumseh (Corporation).
- 1.2 Through introducing guidelines and standards, the process of managing and resolving complaints will become more efficient, allowing staff to respond to complaints in a timely manner and provide an opportunity to improve the Corporation's programs and services.

2.0 Legislative Authority

- 2.1 Section 270(1) 5 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, and the *Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014* requires a municipality to be accountable to the public for its actions. This policy supports the commitment to the accountability and transparency of its operations of the Corporation.

3.0 Policy Scope

3.1 This policy does not apply to:

- a) A decision of Council or a committee of Council;
- b) Internal employee complaints;
- c) Matters addressed by legislation or an existing municipal by-law;
- d) Matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, etc.

3.2 This policy does not apply to Closed Meeting Investigations, complaints made by employees, volunteers working on behalf of the Corporation or complaints about members of Council.

3.3 This policy does not address:

- a) Inquiries;
- b) Requests for Service;
- c) Feedback;
- d) Compliments;
- e) Requests for accommodation;
- f) Criticisms or anonymous complaints.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 A **complaint** is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, facility or staff member, where a citizen believes that the Corporation has not provided a service experience to their satisfaction at the point of service delivery and a response or resolution is expected.

4.1.1 A complaint is distinct from the following:

- a) A request for service made on behalf of a citizen for a specific municipal service, or to notify the Corporation that a scheduled service was not provided on time;
- b) A general inquiry or specific request for information regarding a municipal service;

- c) An expression of approval or compliment for a municipal staff member, program, product or process; or
 - d) A suggestion or idea submitted by a customer with the aim of improving services, programs, products, or processes.
- 4.2 **Complainant** is the person who is dissatisfied and is filing the complaint. Complainants may include residents, people who work in or visit the Town, local businesses, or community groups.
- 4.3 **Frontline Staff** is a Corporation staff member who is the first person in contact with the public.
- 4.4 **Responsible Staff Member** is the Manager or Director selected to investigate and issue a decision on the complaint.

5.0 Procedure

- 5.1 When an informal resolution cannot be achieved either by a frontline staff member or a Manager/Director, a complaint may be submitted in a number of ways:
- a) Online through the Town of Tecumseh website using the Report an Issue form or Cityworks;
 - b) In person, voicemail or telephone calls, recorded in Cityworks;
 - c) In writing, through a hand delivered letter, mail or email directly to staff or Member of Council.
- 5.2 A formal complaint shall be submitted into Cityworks and include the following components:
- a) Contact details of the complainant; and
 - b) Type of complaint;
 - c) Summary of the complaint (details, location, Town employee involved, resolution requested, and any supporting documents);
 - d) Date.
- 5.3 All complaints should be filed as soon as possible.

5.4 Informal Complaint

- 5.5 It is the responsibility of employees to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal complaints, and identify opportunities to improve municipal services.
- 5.6 For cases where informal resolution is successful, complaint logging is not required.

5.7 Formal Complaint

- 5.8 A formal complaint is generated when an informal resolution could not be successfully achieved. Formal complaints shall be submitted to the Town and entered into Cityworks. The complaint will be acknowledged within three (3) business days upon receipt.

6.0 Public Complaint Process

- 6.1 All complaints shall be entered into Cityworks for reporting and follow-up. The complaint must be tracked from its initial receipt to its resolution.

6.2 Acknowledgement

- 6.3 Complaints shall receive an acknowledgement within three (3) business days. Depending on the nature of the complaint, an initial email or written response may be required to acknowledge the inquiry. The initial acknowledgement should include the contact person conducting the investigation, a timeline estimate for further follow-up and the next steps in the process. If a formal decision of Council is required, staff will advise the complainant, provide the date to Council and outline that an official response will be provided within five (5) business days of the Council decision.

6.4 Assess

- 6.5 Contact the complainant to clarify the complaint, if needed. The complaint may be terminated at this point if a resolution is possible, if it is a duplicate or if it does not fit the definition of a complaint.

6.6 Assign

- 6.7 Once the complaint is created in Cityworks, the complaint will be assigned to the appropriate responsible staff member and responsible department.

6.8 Investigate

6.9 The responsible staff member will:

- a) Document all notes on the nature of complaint in Cityworks, and add any supporting documentation into the file;
- b) Contact the complainant where a quick resolution is possible;
- c) Notify the complainant in writing of an approximate length of time if it is determined that the issue may result in a lengthy investigation process;
- d) Review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so may:
 - i) Review relevant municipal and provincial legislation;
 - ii) Review the municipality's relevant policies and procedures;
 - iii) Interview employees;
 - iv) Identify actions taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations.

6.10 Resolve

6.11 The responsible staff member will provide a resolution in writing to the complainant within thirty (30) days upon receipt of the complaint. If a resolution cannot be provided within thirty (30) days upon receipt of the complaint, staff shall contact the complainant about the delay and provide an estimation of time for the decision.

6.12 The decision will consist of information such as:

6.13 Overview of complaint;

- e) Details of how the investigation was conducted;
- f) Summary of the facts;
- g) Outline of the findings;
- h) Identification of next steps;
- i) Suggestions for appropriate resolution along with the rationale supporting the proposed resolution.

6.14 The Director of the appropriate department and/or Chief Administrative Officer will get involved where necessary to assist staff, where matters require discretion, or when other corporate policies are involved.

6.15 Tracking and Reporting

6.16 The complaint must be tracked from its initial receipt to its resolution. Complaint records will be needed for regular review and analysis to identify recurring issues and to improve customer service and satisfaction. Annually, the number of complaints, type of complaints, and number of resolved complaints shall undergo review by the Chief Administrative Office and Clerk's Department, with an annual presentation to the Senior Management Team. All personal information collected in carrying out this Policy will be dealt with in a confidential manner in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

6.17 Records Management

6.18 All records relating to the complaint shall be uploaded and maintained in Cityworks in accordance with the Town's Records Retention Schedule.

7.0 Related Policies

- a) Policy No. 57 Confidentiality of Information
- b) Policy No. XX Customer Service Policy