



Municipal Formal Complaint Policy

1. POLICY STATEMENT AND RATIONALE

The Township of The Archipelago is committed to a fair and uniform process for responding to complaints received from members of the public regarding programs, facilities, Township services, staff or operational procedures. This Policy outlines the process to be followed for the filing of, and handling of formal public complaints.

The Township of The Archipelago recognizes the importance of public input and recognizes formal complaints as a valuable form of feedback. This Policy will assist the Municipality in continuing to provide excellent service to the public and will contribute to the continuous improvement of operations.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all formal complaints received from members of the public regarding administrative actions and functions of the Township of The Archipelago (i.e. programs, facilities, services, staff, operational procedures etc.), if they cannot be effectively remedied through the respective department head by means of an informal complaint or request for service.

Members of the public are encouraged to seek informal resolution as the fastest way of dealing with issues, by contacting the appropriate Department Manager via the Township website at www.thearchipelago.on.ca/p/staff-directory.

This policy has been put in place to assist members of the public with a transparent process for lodging a formal complaint regarding an unresolved municipal operational issue. As well, this Policy will provide staff with guidance on the appropriate process to recognize, investigate and respond to formal complaints from members of the public. The Township of The Archipelago will deal with all formal written complaints promptly, courteously, impartially and professionally. All such complaints will be treated with respect and will not receive adverse treatment or any form of reprisal.

As part of the complaint process, all written complaints filed with the Township of The Archipelago, via the form attached, will receive a response, usually within ten working days.

3. EXCLUSIONS

This complaint policy will not be used to address the following issues:

- Inquiries
- Requests for service
- Feedback
- Compliments
- Requests for accommodation
- Criticisms or anonymous complaints(unless it involves an urgent health or safety issue)
- Issues addressed by legislation, or an existing Municipal By-law, policy or procedure (i.e. By-law Enforcement Complaints)
- A decision of Council or of a Committee of Council
- Internal employee complaints
- Complaints about Members of Council
- Matters that are handled by tribunal, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards etc.

4. DEFINITIONS

Complaint – an expression of dissatisfaction related to the Township of The Archipelago’s programs, facilities, services, Township employee or operational procedures, where it is believed that the Township 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.

Complainant – The person who is dissatisfied and is filing the complaint. Anyone who uses or is affected by Township services can make a complaint.

5. TYPES OF COMPLAINTS

Informal Complaints

It is encouraged that individuals and Municipal staff work to resolve issues or concerns in order that they do not become formal complaints. Informal complaints may be made in person, by phone, letter, email or fax and can be dealt with through direct management action.

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 being generated, an investigation, and a decision.

6. FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

1. Filing a complaint

Where resolution cannot be achieved, complaints should be submitted to the Chief Administrative Officer. The complainant must fill out a complaint form, attached as Schedule "A" to this Policy, and shall include the following information:

- Name and contact details of the complainant (mailing address, telephone number, and email address);
- Type of complaint being submitted;
- Summary of the complaint, including details, location, Township employee(s) involved, enclosures;
- Name and contact information of any witnesses;
- Any efforts undertaken (if any) to resolve the concern/issue;
- Type of resolution being sought, and/or suggestions for improvements; and
- Complainant's signature and date the complaint is being submitted.

2. Upon Receipt of the Complaint

The Chief Administrative Officer shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 7 days of receipt of the complaint.

The Chief Administrative Officer shall review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so may:

- a) Review relevant Municipal and Provincial legislation;
- b) Review the Municipality's relevant policies and procedures;
- c) Review any existing file documents;
- d) Interview employees or members of the public involved in the complaint;
- e) Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve Municipal operations; or
- f) Take other action he/she deems expedient to resolving the matter.

At the discretion of the Chief Administrative Officer, the complaint and the nature thereof may be referred to Council.

If a complaint is made against the Chief Administrative Officer, the complaint shall be submitted to the Reeve of the Municipality. As part of the investigation, the Reeve may consult with senior staff and legal counsel.

3. Decision

A final response, where possible, from the Chief Administrative Officer (or Reeve as per above) shall be sent to the complainant within 10 business days, barring

exceptional circumstances. If it cannot be answered in this time frame, the complainant will be so notified with an explanation. The response shall include:

- a) Whether the complaint was substantiated; or
- b) If the complaint is not substantiated, the Chief Administrative Officer shall provide reason for the decision; and
- c) Any actions the Municipality has or will take as a result of the complaint.

Written records will be kept with respect to details and actions for each formal complaint.

7. APPEALS

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

In the event a complaint is not resolved through the Municipality's complaint process to the satisfaction of the complainant, it may be submitted to the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario:

Mail to: 483 Bay Street
10th Floor, South Tower
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

Online: www.ombudsman.on.ca
Phone: 1-800-263-1830
Fax: 416-586-3485

8. FRIVOLOUS AND/OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

A complaint may be considered vexatious or frivolous if it is pursued in a manner that is reasonably perceived by the Chief Administrative Officer to be (a) malicious, (b) intended to embarrass or harass, or (c) intended solely to be a nuisance.

Where the complaint is considered vexatious and/or frivolous, or there appears to be a pattern of vexatious and/or frivolous complaints, the Chief Administrative Officer may deem the file closed.

9. PRIVACY

The Township of The Archipelago's employees will adhere to all applicable legislation regarding privacy in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

Personal information on the complaint is treated as confidential to protect the privacy of the complainant. However, the complainant should be aware that certain circumstances may directly or indirectly identify him/her during an investigation.



Schedule "A"

Township of The Archipelago
Municipal Complaint Form

COMPLAINANT CONTACT DETAILS

First Name	Last Name
Municipal Civic Address/Property Location	Phone Number
Mailing Address	
Email Address	

COMPLAINT TYPE

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Conduct |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Processes or Procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Timeliness of Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT

Please outline details of your complaint below, including relevant dates, times, location and background information (which should include municipal employees you have contacted to resolve the complaint, witnesses to the incident, photographs etc.) Be as detailed as possible. Attach a separate page where necessary.

Details
Service area/location of problem
Staff persons involved (if known and applicable)
List of enclosures (include copies of any documentation in support of the complaint)

RESOLVE

How do you suggest the situation be improved or the complaint be resolved?

SIGN OFF

Complainant's signature

Date complaint submitted (mm/dd/yyyy)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date received:

File No:

Acknowledge receipt of the complaint:

Investigation Notes:

Final Response to Complaint:

Date sent: