



Policy: **Municipal Complaint Policy**

Main Contact: **Director of Legislative Services and Council Relations/
Town Clerk**

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Policy Statement

The Municipal Complaint Policy is intended to provide a consistent and uniform process to respond to program and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public. The policy will assist the Municipality in continuing to provide excellent service to the public and will contribute to the continuous improvement of operations.

The following policy establishes guidelines and standards for the efficient handling and resolution of complaints made toward the Municipality in order to address concerns raised and improve services.

Purpose

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, facility, or staff member.

This policy does not address:

- Inquiries
- Request for service
- Feedback
- Compliments
- Social media comments
- Request for accommodation
- Criticisms or anonymous complaints
- Issues addressed by legislation, or an existing municipal by-law, policy or procedure
- A decision by Council or a Board/Committee
- Internal employee complaints
- Matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, etc.

For example, a request made to the Municipality for a specific service such as repair to street surface, by-law or parking infractions, damage to municipal property, or garbage pick-up do not qualify as a complaint under this policy.

This policy does not apply to external boards), Closed Meeting Investigations, complaints made by employees, contractors, or volunteers working on behalf of the Municipality, or complaints about members of Council, unless deemed to fall outside of Council Code of Conduct and directly related to a municipal service or program.

Definitions

In this policy, the following terms have the meanings set out below:

Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”) – the Chief Administrative Officer for the Corporation of the Town of Renfrew whose position is referred to in Section 229 of the Municipal Act and appointed by Council.

Clerk - the Municipal Town Clerk of the Corporation of the Town of Renfrew who is duly appointed by by-law pursuant to Section 228 of the *Municipal Act*, including any Deputy Town Clerk or other designate.

Complainant - the individual filing the complaint with the Town of Renfrew.

Complaint - an expression of dissatisfaction relating to a Town of Renfrew program, service, or facility.

Compliment - an expression of approval for a Town of Renfrew program, service, or facility.

Council Code of Conduct – Town of Renfrew’s Council Code of Conduct, a mandatory framework established under Section 223.2 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* that sets out the ethical standards and expected behavior for members of municipal council and local boards.

Customer Service Complaint Policy – Town of Renfrew’s Customer Service, Compliment and Complaint Policy, an established process where comments whether positive or negative are dealt with fairly, in a respectful manner, and address as established in its guidelines.

Department Head - highest level of management including, but not limited to, the following positions: Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Director of Development & Environment/Deputy CAO, Director of Legislative Services & Council Relations/Town Clerk, Treasurer/Director of Finance & Corporate Services, Director of Infrastructure, Public Works & Engineering, Director of Community Services & Recreation/Library CEO, and Fire Chief/Director of Fire, Emergency & Protective Services.

External Board - Not defined under the *Municipal Act* as a local board and governed independently from the direct control of the municipality. I.e. Renfrew Public Library Board, South Ottawa Valley O.P.P. Detachment Board.

Facility - in the context of municipally owned property, refers to any land, building, structure, or infrastructure that is owned, operated, or managed by a municipality for the purpose of delivering public services or supporting municipal operations.

Integrity Commissioner - an independent accountability officer appointed by a council under Section 223.3 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Member of Council - elected Head of Council and elected members of Renfrew Town Council.

Municipal Program/Service - any activity, initiative, or function that a municipality provides or supports to meet the needs of its residents and fulfill its responsibilities under provincial legislation.

Municipality or “Town” - The Corporation of the Town of Renfrew.

Municipal Act - Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended or replaced from time to time.

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (“MFIPPA”) - Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended or replaced from time to time.

Municipal Staff (“Staff”) - includes anyone employed by the Municipality, including officers, full-time, part-time, temporary, casual or seasonal staff, contract staff, students and volunteers.

Ombudsman - the Ontario Office of the Ombudsman, governed under the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 13 - Bill 8, as amended or replaced from time to time.

Types of Complaints

Informal Complaints

It is encouraged that individuals and municipal staff work to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal complaints. Informal complaints may be made in person, by phone, letter, email or fax.

In accordance with the Town’s Customer Service Complaint Policy, 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 generated, investigation, and decision. Appendix A of this policy is the Formal Complaint Form.



Formal Complaint Procedure

Filing a Complaint

The complainant must fill out a complaint form which shall include the following information:

- Contact details of the complainant
- Type of complaint
- Details of the complaint (location, employee involved, resolution requested, enclosures, date complaint submitted)
- Signature and date

Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

Acknowledgement

Formal complaints shall be submitted to the Clerk. Upon receipt, the complaint will be given a tracking number and will be acknowledged in writing within seven (7) calendar days.

The Clerk will assess if the complaint falls within this policy as per the scope of this policy, and shall notify:

- i) In the case of Staff other than the Department Head, the Staff Member's Department Head and Chief Administrative Officer;
- ii) In the case of a Department Head, Chief Administrative Officer;
- iii) In the case of the Chief Administrative Officer, Members of Council;
or
- iv) In the case of a member of council, the Integrity Commissioner.

Investigation

The Staff member's Department Head shall investigate all complaints under this policy related to Staff and take such action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with all other applicable policies.

The Chief Administrative officer shall investigate all complaints under this policy related to Department Heads and take such action as is deemed

appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with other applicable policies;

Members of Council shall investigate all complaints under this policy related to the Chief Administrative Officer and take such action as is deemed appropriate in the circumstances and in accordance with all other applicable policies;

The Integrity Commissioner shall receive all complaints under this policy related to Members and investigate in accordance with the process as set out in the Council Code of Conduct. Where there is a discrepancy between this policy and the Council Code of Conduct, the Council Code of Conduct shall prevail.

As a part of the investigation, all involved parties (complainant, employee, etc. will be interviewed.

Decision

A decision will be made within thirty (30) calendar days upon acknowledgement of the complaint. The Department Head, or Chief Administrative Officer, shall provide a written response outlining the results of the investigation into the complaint.

The response shall note whether the complaint was substantiated and include any actions the Municipality may 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.

Appeal

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

In the event complaints cannot be resolved through the Municipality's complaint process, they may be submitted to the Provincial Ombudsman's office in accordance with the provisions of Bill 8 Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014

Records Management and Privacy

All records relating to the complaint shall be maintained in accordance with the Municipality's record retention schedule.

During the complaints process, all Municipal employees shall adhere to all applicable legislation regarding privacy in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*. Complainants should be aware that certain circumstances may identify them during an investigation.

Monitoring

The Town Clerk will cause this policy to be periodically reviewed and updated as required.

Authority

Section 224 of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended states that the role of Council includes the development and evaluation of the policies and programs of the municipality.

Contact

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Change History

Policy Name	Effective Date	Significant Changes	By-law No.
Municipal Complaint Policy	March 26, 2019	New Policy	Resolution 2019-3-28
Municipal Complaint Policy	November 22, 2022	Updated Contact Details	N/A
Municipal Complaint Policy	July 8, 2025	Review and updated contact details with minor policy detail changes	65-2025