



Client Experience Policy

Township of the North Shore

Important Disclaimer: this policy complies with the relevant provisions of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, SO 2001, c 25 (the "*Municipal Act*"). If you have any questions or concerns about this protocol or how to implement it, please contact Wishart Law Firm LLP. Wishart Law Firm LLP is not responsible for the results of any edit to this protocol other than as expressly authorized or directed by Wishart Law Firm LLP.

© 2020, Wishart Law Firm LLP

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means (graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or information and retrieval systems) without the written permission of Wishart Law Firm LLP.

A licence is, however, given by Wishart Law Firm LLP to the Township of the North Shore to print, copy, save, or post on its official website for its own use only. This policy may not be repurposed or resold.

Contents

1. Policy Statement.....	1
2. Purpose	1
3. Core Values.....	1
4. Application.....	1
5. Policy Requirements.....	2
5.1 General Principles	2
5.2 What Is a Complaint?	2
5.3 Who Can Make a Complaint?	2
5.4 How to Submit a Complaint.....	3
5.5 What to include in a Complaint	3
5.6 Service Standards.....	3
5.7 Compliance	3
5.8 Complaint Assessment.....	4
5.9 Complaint Investigation.....	4
5.10 Complaint Response.....	4
5.11 Complaint Resolution	4
5.12 Decision Communication.....	4
5.13 Complaint Closure.....	4
6. Responsibilities	4
7. Monitoring/Contraventions.....	5
8. Legislative and Administrative Authorities	5
9. Definitions.....	5
10. Enquiries	5
Schedule "A" – Complaint Form	6

1. Policy Statement

The Township of the North Shore (the “Township”) is committed to a consistent and uniform process to respond to complaints received from members of the public regarding programs, facilities, Township services, staff or operational procedures. This policy and the accompanying procedures outline the process to be followed and service standards for the handling of public complaints.

2. Purpose

The Township recognizes the importance of public feedback and welcomes complaints as a valuable form of feedback regarding our services, operations and facilities. The information gained from complaints helps improve the quality of the services provided by the Township and the client experience of residents.

3. Core Values

(1) The following core values inform this policy:

- (a) Customer focus: We are committed to continuous improvement in service delivery.
- (b) Accountability: Complaints are handled in a fair, respectful and transparent manner, as quickly as possible.
- (c) Responsiveness: Complaints are tracked and the complainant is informed of each step.
- (d) Accessibility: Information on how to submit a complaint is easily found on the Township’s website and through other Township outreach mechanisms.
- (e) Simplicity: The process must be simple to understand and easy to use. Complainants are guided on what to include in the complaint (e.g., the “five Ws”).
- (f) Confidentiality: Complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner according to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA). Information will be collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the Act.

4. Application

(1) The policy applies to:

- (a) Township employees.

2) The policy does not apply to:

- (a) outside boards and agencies, including the Police Service, Public Library and Public Health Department, which have their own complaints handling processes;
 - (b) the Township's elected officials and their offices.
- (3) The policy applies to complaints that are received by phone, at the Municipal Office, by e-mail, by mail or by fax.
- 4) The policy **does not** apply to:
- (a) requests for service;
 - (b) feedback;
 - (c) compliments;
 - (d) inquiries;
 - (e) anonymous complaints;
 - (f) requests for accommodation.

These communications and requests are all handled through other mechanisms and processes.

5. Policy Requirements

5.1 General Principles

(1) The Township will deal with all complaints promptly, courteously, impartially and professionally. All complainants will be treated with respect and will not receive adverse treatment or any form of reprisal.

(2) All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and other applicable legislation. The identity of the complainant will be made known only to those who need to know to consider the complaint. All participants in the complaints process shall keep the details of the complaint confidential except as may be required by law. If the matter goes to arbitration, it may be necessary to release the complainant's name and contact information during the resolution process.

5.2 What Is a Complaint?

(1) A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the action or lack of action taken regarding operations, facilities or services provided by the Township or by a person or body acting on behalf of the Township.

(2) All complaints filed necessitate a response.

5.3 Who Can Make a Complaint?

(1) Anyone who uses or is affected by Township services can make a complaint. This includes:

- (a) residents;
- (b) people who work in or visit the Township;
- (c) local businesses;
- (d) community groups.

5.4 How to Submit a Complaint

- (a) by telephone;
- (b) by e-mail;
- (c) by mail;
- (d) by fax;
- (e) via the Township's website: <http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca>;
- (e) In person at the Municipal Office.

5.5 What to include in a Complaint

Complaints should be in writing and should include information such as:

- (a) details of what happened;
- (b) where it happened; whether it is within the City's areas of responsibility;
- (c) when it happened;
- (d) who was involved;
- (e) what was said or done;
- (f) what kind of resolution is being sought;
- (g) contact details of the complainant.

It is recommended that complaints be in the form attached as **Schedule "A"** (the "Complaint Form").

Those submitting complaints in person shall be required to complete the Complaint Form. If the person making the in-person complaint cannot complete the form themselves, the person receiving the complaint shall do so on their behalf and review the completed form with them for their signature (note: the complainant must sign the Complaint Form for the complaint to proceed).

5.6 Service Standards

The following service standards will be adhered to in the handling of all complaints received:

- (a) Complainants must receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their complaint and an assigned tracking number within 3 business days. This acknowledgement must identify who will be following up on the complaint as well as their contact information.
- (b) A final response or update must be sent to the complainant within 20 business days, barring exceptional circumstances.

5.7 Compliance

The Clerk-Treasurer is responsible for implementation and ongoing compliance with this policy.

5.8 Complaint Assessment

The complainant may be contacted to clarify the complaint. The complaint may be terminated at this point if a resolution is mutually determined, if it is a duplicate, not a complaint, or is frivolous or vexatious. The complainant will be notified and redirected if possible.

5.9 Complaint Investigation

Coordinated by the Clerk-Treasurer, staff will be consulted, findings summarized, and action identified to resolve the complaint. The complainant shall be notified of the approximate length of time the investigation should take.

5.10 Complaint Response

The response to a complaint shall do the following:

- (a) set out the complaint;
- (b) detail how the investigation was conducted;
- (c) summarize the facts;
- (d) outline the findings;
- (e) suggest appropriate resolution along with the rationale supporting the proposed resolution.

5.11 Complaint Resolution

Resolutions may include an explanation, apology, reconsideration, restitution and/or change in policy --- all are possible remedies.

5.12 Decision Communication

Communication of the decision shall include:

- (a) providing the complainant the response;
- (b) identifying next steps/appeal; paper review by the Clerk-Treasurer.

5.13 Complaint Closure

If the complainant is satisfied, the complaint is closed.

6. Responsibilities

- (1) *Employees*: All employees are to have knowledge and awareness of the Township's requirement to receive complaints, the process through which a complaint can be made and the service standards that apply to complaints.
- (2) *Supervisors*: Supervisors are responsible for facilitating prompt response to all complaints by their staff to ensure that service standards are achieved.
- (3) *Clerk-Treasurer*: The Clerk-Treasurer is responsible for the receipt and response of all complaints according to the service standards set out. The Clerk-Treasurer holds responsibility for compliance to the complaints policy.

7. Monitoring/Contraventions

- (1) The complaint needs to be tracked from its initial receipt to its resolution.
- (2) All complaint records will be kept securely and in accordance with the Township's record retention by-law and legislative responsibilities.
- (3) Complaint records shall be periodically reviewed and analysed to capture recurring issues and improve client service and satisfaction.

8. Legislative and Administrative Authorities

- (a) *Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act*
- (b) *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

9. Definitions

- (1) **“Complaint”** means any expression of dissatisfaction about the action or lack of action taken regarding operations, facilities or services provided by the Township or by a person or body acting on behalf of the Township. The term “dissatisfaction” is key to the definition of a complaint. Feedback of a positive or general nature, comments on a service or facility that do not require a response, or requests for service are not complaints. Complaints imply that the complainant is unhappy with the service received and that they require a follow-up response in regard to the issue.
- (2) **“Complainant”** means the person who is dissatisfied and filing the complaint. Anyone who uses or is affected by Township services can make a complaint including residents, people who work in or visit the city, local businesses or community groups.
- (3) **“Compliment”** means an expression of appreciation for satisfactory or above-satisfactory service.
- (4) **“Feedback”** means input from a client that is neither positive nor negative, but provides input or ideas.
- (5) **“Service request”** means a request for a specific service provided by the Township. See the list online at <http://www.townshipofthenorthshore.ca/municipalservices/services.html>.

10. Enquiries

For more information on this policy please contact: Clerk-Treasurer, 705-849-2213, ext. 25, twpns@ontera.net

Schedule "A" – Complaint Form

PART A. Person Filing Complaint

Name: _____ Address: _____
City: _____ Province: _____
Phone Number: _____
Date of Birth: ____/____/____
 YYYY/MM/DD
Email Address: _____

PART B. Complainant Information

Name*: _____ Address: _____
City: _____ Province: _____
Phone Number: _____
Date of Birth: ____/____/____
 YYYY/MM/DD
Email Address: _____

PART C. Details of Complaint

Incident Date: ____/____/____
 YYYY/MM/DD
Incident Time (Approx.): _____
Incident Description:

Please include: What happened, where it happened, who was involved, and what was said or done.

** Attach additional pages if required.*

Witness Names: _____

List of Enclosed Documents:

** Attach additional pages if required.*

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____
YYYY/MM/DD