

Corporation of the Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers Complaint Policy

Policy Statement:

The Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers is committed to a consistent, fair and uniform complaint process and to provide opportunities for feedback about the programs, services, facilities and employees of the Township.

The Township recognizes that concerns from the public are at times brought forward and dealt with informally, however not all concerns can be dealt with informally. This policy ensures a consistent and uniform approach to formal complaints with a fair and accountable level of service delivery.

Definitions:

‘Complaint’ means an expression of dissatisfaction relating to the Township’s programs, services, facilities, employees and/or bylaw complaints. Anonymous complaints or complaints made on behalf of an unidentified third party will not be entertained or investigated. A complaint is different from a request for service, enquiry, feedback, compliment, or suggestion. Only written complaints shall be considered formal complaints.

‘Complainant’ means the person who is dissatisfied and filing a complaint.

‘Compliment’ means an expression of appreciation relating to the Township’s programs, services, facilities and employees. This type of communication does not require a response.

‘Enquiry’ means a general or specific request for information relating to the Township’s programs, services, facilities and employees.

‘Feedback’ or ‘Suggestion’ means an opinion, comment and expression of interest relating to the Township’s programs, services, facilities and employees or an idea submitted to the Township with the aim of improving programs, services or facilities. This type of communication does not require a response.

‘Request for Service’ means a request made by a member of the public for a specific service provided by the Township. For example, a request for services may include a request to repair/maintain a street surface, report an issue relating to municipal services, or report damage to a facility or park. This type of communication does not require a response.

Scope and Responsibility

This policy applies to communication received from members of the public such as complaints, compliments, feedback and suggestions relating to the Township's programs, services, facilities and employees.

Compliments, Enquiries, Feedback, Suggestions and Requests for Service made by a member of the public should be submitted in writing and should be resolved at the point of service delivery and may be tracked to identify issues, trends, areas of concern and opportunities for improvement.

The Township will make every effort to resolve complaints received in a timely, courteous, impartial and professional manner.

All complainants will be treated with respect and will not receive adverse treatment or any form of reprisal.

Complaints will be tracked and regularly monitored and reviewed to identify issues, trends, areas of concern and opportunities for improvement.

The Clerk-Administrator shall be consulted only as deemed appropriate by the Department Head or depending on the nature of the complaint if it should be brought before Council.

Procedure for Submitting a Complaint

Prior to submitting a complaint, members of the public are encouraged to determine whether the subject is either a request for service, enquiry, compliment, feedback, suggestion or complaint. Written complaints shall be considered formal complaints.

All complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner according to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Information will be collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the *Act*. The identity of the complainant shall be kept confidential, however, if the matter becomes legal, the complainant could be called to testify and give evidence to substantiate the Township's position. The personal information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to consider the complaint. All participants in the complaints process shall keep the details of the complaint confidential except as may be required. Complaints received by one department are to be limited to that specific department unless the complaint involves more than one department.

All bylaw complaints shall be submitted in writing to the Township by the complainant on the prescribed 'Complaint Form' (attached to Policy) and signed by the complainant.

A complaint shall be submitted in writing to the Township, in person at the Township Office at 11 Birch Lake Road, Massy, by email (inquiries@sables-spanish.ca), by fax at 705-865-2736 or online through the Township Website www.sables-spanish.ca.

Complainants are encouraged to use the prescribed “Complaint Form” available on the Township’s website or at the Township Office.

Complaints must include the following information:

- Specific details of what happened;
- Details of where it occurred, who was involved (if applicable);
- Date and time of occurrence;
- What outcome is being sought, if any; and
- Contact information of the complainant.

The complaint will be tracked and forwarded to the appropriate department. Within five (5) business days of receipt of the complaint, an acknowledgement letter will be sent in writing that the complaint was received.

Within thirty (30) business days of receipt of a complaint, a response in writing will be provided to the complainant and will include:

- Whether the complaint was validated,
- If the complaint is not validated, provide reason(s) for their decision; and,
- Any actions the municipality has or will take as a result of the complaint.

If a response is unable to be provided within thirty (30) business days, the complainant shall be notified of the delay and an estimate of when a response will be provided.

Complaints that can be resolved quickly or easily may combine the acknowledgement and final response in a single letter within the five (5) business day time period.

If a complaint has been brought to Council and the Township has communicated the decision to the complainant, there is no appeal process at the municipal level. Complainants that are dissatisfied with the outcome or process may submit a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman at www.ombudsman.on.ca.

Attachments:

Complaint Form