



THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ARRAN-ELDERSLIE

1925 Bruce Road 10, Box 70, Chesley, ON N0G 1L0
519-363-3039 Fax: 519-363-2203 areld@bmts.com

Policy Name:	<i>Complaint Response Policy</i>	Policy No:
Department:	<i>Municipality Wide</i>	
Effective Date:	<i>April 11th, 2016</i>	
Date Revised:		
Authority:	<i>Bill 8, Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014</i>	

Coverage:

This policy is intended to enable Arran-Elderslie to promptly and effectively address program and service delivery complaints raised by members of the public. This policy provides the mechanism to respond to complaints and will assist the Municipality in providing excellent customer service to the public and contribute to continuous improvement of operations.

Purpose:

This policy provides guidance on the appropriate process to recognize, investigate and respond to formal complaints from members of the public regarding municipal employees, programs, services, facilities or operational procedures.

This policy applies to ALL municipal employees (including contract) and encompasses all Board and/or Committee "staff" that fall under the jurisdiction of the Municipality. This does not encompass elected officials, or outside agencies.

Definition:

"Clerk-Administrator" means the Clerk-Administrator of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

"Chair" means the Chairperson on a Board or Committee under the jurisdiction of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie.

"Complainant" means the individual filing the Complaint with the Municipality. This may be any municipal resident, ratepayer or user or municipal services, including



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visitors, non-resident workers, community groups, and local businesses. The complainant cannot remain anonymous.

“Complaint” means an issue or concern of dissatisfaction with the actions, or lack thereof, of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie regarding a program, service, or operation that is not resolved at the time the Complainant submits their Complaint to the Municipality in accordance with this policy. In this context, formal complaints must relate to specific actions and not to policy decisions made by Council. A Complaint is distinct from:

- Request for Service – (e.g. request for Building Inspection, severance application, etc.)
- Enquiry – a general or specific request for information regarding a service made by a resident/ratepayer that is resolved at the point of service delivery
- Feedback – an opinion, comment or expression of interest in a Municipal program for service

“Council” means the Council of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

“Employee” means the employee of the Municipality (including contract or volunteer)

“Mayor” means the Mayor of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

“Municipality” means the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie

“Ombudsman” means the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario

“Policy” means the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie Complaint Handling Policy

General Provisions:

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will deal with all formal complaints promptly, courteously, impartially, and professionally. All complainants will be treated with respect and will not receive adverse treatment or any form of reprisal.

Regular Feedback is encouraged and is an important part of quality customer service. Regular feedback includes:

- Compliment – an expression of appreciation for satisfactory or above-satisfactory service



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- Feedback – input from ratepayer/resident or public member providing input or ideas
- Service Request – a request for a specific service provided by the municipality

Concerns can be resolved in an informal manner with responsible staff. However, the submission of a formal complaint is available to address dissatisfaction with the actions, or lack thereof, of the Municipality regarding operations, facilities or services provided, or the conduct of a municipal employee.

Complaints will be processed in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and other applicable legislation. The identity of the complainant and any associated person information that could lead the complainant to be identified will be made known only to those who require the information to assess the complaint effectively. All participants in the complaints process will keep the personal information of the complainant confidential except where required by law.

Formal complaint may not be anonymous.

Complaints can be made by any individual or group that either uses or is affected by municipal services. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Residents and ratepayers
- Individuals who work in the municipality
- Visitors
- Local businesses
- Community groups

The Municipality will ensure that the complaints procedure is acceptable and that mechanisms are in place to allow those requiring assistance to make their complaint, including the provision of alternative formats or communication supports.

A formal complaint form will be made available for this purpose. The form can be completed and submitted by:

- Mail
- Email
- Fax
- In person at the Municipal Administration Office



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The Ombudsman encourages municipalities to have local mechanisms for resolution of complaints. Accordingly, prior to submitting a complaint to the Ombudsman, a formal written complaint should be submitted to the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie for review.

Formal complaints will be processed in a timely manner. All complaints will be investigated and receive a response.

Procedures:

1. Responsibility of Complainant/Employees

- 1.1 It is the responsibility of the Complainant to attempt to resolve their concerns by dealing directly with the employee(s) within the Department providing the service, up to and including the Department Manager.
- 1.2 It is the responsibility of the Employee(s) to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become Complaints, and identify opportunities to improve Municipality services.

2. Filing a Complaint

- 2.1 Where a resolution cannot be achieved, complaints should be submitted to the attention of the Clerk-Administrator. Complaints shall be submitted on the form attached as Schedule 'A' to this policy, and will include:
 - The name, phone number, email address, and mailing address of the Complainant;
 - The nature of the Complaint, including:
 - Background leading to the complaint
 - Date(s), time(s) and location(s) of any incident(s); and
 - Name(s) of any Employee(s) previously contacted regarding the Complaint(s); and
 - Actions the Complainant is requesting of the Municipality

3. Upon Receipt of a Complaint

- 3.1 The Clerk-Administrator's Office shall acknowledge receipt of the Complaint, within five (5) working days of receipt of the Complaint.
- 3.2 The Clerk-Administrator shall review the issues identified by the Complainant and in doing so may:
 - Review relevant municipal and provincial legislation;
 - Review the Municipality's relevant policies and procedures;
 - Review any existing file documents;



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- Interview employees or members of the public involved in the Complaint;
 - Identify actions that may be taken to address the Complaint or improve Municipal operations; or
 - Take other actions that the Clerk-Administrator deems expedient to resolving the matter
- 3.3 Upon receipt of a Complaint, and where the Clerk-Administrator deems appropriate, the Clerk-Administrator may delegate the authority to investigate and respond to a Complaint to another Employee.
- 3.4 The Clerk-Administrator may not delegate the authority to investigate a Complaint to an Employee who is or may be named in the Complaint.
- 3.5 The Clerk-Administrator shall maintain a file of the Complaint in compliance with the Municipality's records retention by-law.
- 3.6 The Clerk-Administrator may, at their discretion, notify Council of an open Complaint investigation for information purposes.
- 3.7 If the Complaint is made against the Clerk-Administrator, the Complaint shall be submitted to the Mayor for investigation. As part of the investigation the Mayor may consult with legal counsel and Council and may refer the matter to the Ombudsman.

4. Decision

- 4.1 Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of a Complaint by the Clerk-Administrator, a response shall be provided in writing to the Complainant. The response shall include:
- Whether the Complaint was substantiated;
 - If the complaint is not substantiated; (the Clerk-Administrator shall provide reason(s) for their decision; and
 - Any actions the Municipality has or will take as a result of the Complaint.
- 4.2 If the Clerk-Administrator is unable to provide a response within thirty (30) days of receipt, they shall notify the Complainant of the delay and provide an estimate of when a response will be provided.
- 4.3 Decisions made by the Clerk-Administrator may not be appealed to the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie Council.

5. General

- 5.1 Copies of all correspondence and notices shall be retained in the Complaint file.
- 5.2 Where appropriate, copies of correspondence shall be placed in the Employee's file that is the subject of the Complaint.



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- 5.3 Communications with a Complainant shall not provide details of disciplinary measures imposed on any Employee.
- 5.4 The Clerk-Administrator or their designate shall make dated records of any communication and attempted contacts with the Complainant(s).

5. Exclusions

This policy is NOT meant to address:

- Complaint(s) about non-municipal services;
- Issues already addressed by legislation, or an existing Municipal by-law, policy or procedure;
- A decision of Council or a decision of a Committee or Board of Council; or
- Internal employee complaint(s)

7. Consequences of Non-Compliance

Non-compliance with the Complaint Response Policy may result in the Complaint being filed with the Ontario Ombudsman for investigation. The consequence to commensurate with the severity of non-compliance.



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Schedule 'A'

MUNICIPALITY OF ARRAN-ELDERSLIE
Complaint Form

Name: _____

Telephone Number: Home _____

Work _____

Cell _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature:

Date

(In accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.M.56, Section 28(2)*, this is to advise you that the personal information collected on this form is treated as confidential and will be used for the proper administration to process a complaint only.)



What is your complaint?

(Please include relevant details, location, and background information, including the Arran-Elderslie employee(s) you have contacted regarding this matter. Additional space is available on the back of this form)



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Please provide the name of the Department Manager you spoke with:

How could this situation be improved?

Additional Information: