



# Municipality of Meaford Corporate Policy

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**Policy:** Formal Complaints  
**Division:** Legislative Services  
**Last Revision:** January 2023

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## Policy Statement

The Municipality of Meaford is committed to responding to formal complaints from members of the public regarding municipal programs, services, facilities, staff, and operational procedures in a consistent manner, following a clearly defined process.

## 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 municipal employees and does not encompass elected officials, nor the Meaford Public Library and other outside agencies.

## Definitions

“Complaint” means an expression of dissatisfaction with the actions, or lack thereof, of the Municipality of Meaford regarding operations, facilities or services provided, or the conduct of a municipal employee. In this context, formal complaints must relate to specific actions and not to policy decisions made by Council.

“Complainant” means the individual bringing forward the complaint. This may be any municipal resident or user of municipal services, including visitors, non-resident workers, community groups, and local businesses. The complainant cannot remain anonymous.

## Policy Requirements

The Municipality of Meaford 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.

### What is not a formal complaint?

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

Regular feedback includes the following:

- Compliment: an expression of appreciation for satisfactory or above-satisfactory service.
- Feedback: input from a client providing input or ideas.
- Service Request: a request for a specific service provided by the Municipality of Meaford.

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 of Meaford regarding operations, facilities or services provided, or the conduct of a municipal employee.

### Privacy

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 personal 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 complaints may not be anonymous.

## Who can make a complaint?

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

## How can complaints be submitted?

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 Office or any other municipal facility.

## Ontario Ombudsman

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 Meaford for review.

## Service Standards

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

Once a formal written complaint is received, it will be acknowledged in writing within two business days. It will be tracked and assigned for response. If the response takes longer than 20 business days, the complainant will be informed of the delay. The response must be approved by the responsible Director and Chief Administrative Officer.

Should the complaint involve the Chief Administrative Officer, the Mayor will investigate and respond.

## Reporting

Council will receive an annual report detailing the number of complaints, the number resolved within the specified timeframe, and the number of complaints found to require action.

## Implications

- a. Community  
This policy will reassure users of municipal programs, services, and facilities of the Municipality of Meaford’s commitment to customer service and to responding to complaints in an effective manner.
- b. Financial  
Complaints management is part of staff’s on-going duties.

## Monitoring

The Chief Administrative Officer shall be responsible for receiving complaints and/or concerns related to this policy.

## Authority

This policy is established pursuant to the Municipal Act, 2001, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), and Bill 8 (the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act).

## Contact

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## Change History

Policy Name	Effective Date	Significant Changes	By-law No.
Formal Complaints	March 1, 2016	New Policy	2016-11
Formal Complaints	January 1, 2023	Updated contact details	N/a



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