

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the City of Oshawa's dedication to serving our community. The City recognizes the importance of public input and welcomes complaints as valuable forms of feedback. This policy provides the public with an avenue for submitting complaints and provides City staff with consistent practices for handling complaints about City programs, facilities, services and staff.

2.0 Source

This policy has been developed in alignment with the Accountable Leadership goal identified in the 2015 – 2019 Oshawa Strategic Plan and in response to recommendations in the Ombudsman Ontario 2014/2015 Annual Report.

3.0 Definitions

Complainant is a customer who is submitting a complaint. Any customer who uses or is affected by City services can make a complaint including residents, visitors, businesses and community groups.

Complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern about the action or lack of action taken by the City related to:

- Programs, facilities, services or staff; or
- Failure to meet a standard of service.

Compliment is an expression of approval or satisfaction for a City service, staff member, program, facility or process.

Feedback is an opinion or comment about a program, facility, service or staff member.

Inquiry is a request for information that is resolved at the point of service delivery.

Personal Information means recorded information about an identifiable individual as outlined in Section 2 of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Request for Service is a request made to the City for a specific service or to notify the City that a service was not provided on time. Examples include:

- Requesting that the City repair a street surface
- Reporting a malfunctioning street light
- Notifying the City of a missed garbage collection
- Reporting a by-law infraction

Suggestion is an idea submitted to the City with the aim of improving services, programs or processes.

4.0 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All City of Oshawa staff, services, programs and facilities
- Contractors and consultants working on behalf of the City

This policy does not apply to:

- Complaints about Members of Council
- Complaints from City staff about other City staff or working conditions
- Compliments
- Decisions made by City Council or one of its Committees
- Inquiries
- Issues that have statutory review and appeal processes including but not limited to Freedom of Information Requests, development charge levies, land use planning, by-law notices, orders and appeals.
- Outside boards and agencies including, for example, the Oshawa Public Library and Robert McLaughlin Gallery
- Requests for Service
- Requests to change a by-law
- Suggestions
- Civil matters

5.0 Principles

Customer focused

The City will deal with complaints promptly and respond in a format that meets the needs of the customer.

Continuous improvement

The City will consider complaints as opportunities to evaluate programs and services for possible improvement and will record lessons learned.

Fair and impartial

The City will deal with complaints in an open-minded and impartial way. Making a complaint will not negatively affect future dealings with the City. Customers will not be discriminated against during the investigation or because of a complaint. Staff about whom a complaint is launched will be treated fairly.

Accountable

The City will provide honest, evidence-based explanations and give reasons for decisions. Information will be provided in a clear and open way. When requested and if appropriate, the City will inform complainant about the lessons learned and corrective actions taken.

Confidentiality

Protecting the privacy of all parties is of utmost importance. Information will be collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The **Customer Service Manager** is responsible for directing complaints to the appropriate Manager or Director, monitoring status of complaints and ensuring response by departments in accordance with the service standards.

Customers are to recognize that the City must consider the needs of the whole community. They are to provide honest and respectful communication with a goal to improving services.

Staff are to have knowledge and understanding of: the purpose of receiving complaints, the process through which a complaint can be made and the service standards that apply to complaints.

Managers and Directors are responsible for investigating and responding to complaints about services they are responsible for. Complaints about staff are to be processed by that staff member's immediate supervisor.

7.0 Process**Resolution Attempt**

Whenever possible, customers are encouraged to work with staff at the first point of contact to have issues addressed. Staff will listen with an open mind and make efforts to resolve concerns in a timely manner.

Submitting a Complaint

Should a resolution not be made at the first point of contact, formal complaints can be submitted through the following channels:

- Online at www.oshawa.ca/complaint
- By telephone at 905-436-3311
- By email at service@oshawa.ca
- By mail to Service Oshawa, 50 Centre St. S., Oshawa ON L1H 3Z7
- By fax to 905-436-5642
- In person at Service Oshawa, 50 Centre St. S., Oshawa ON L1H 3Z7

Details of Complaint

In order to submit a formal complaint to the City, customers are required to provide as much information as possible including:

- Contact Information (name, address, phone number, email)
- Details of what happened
- Location
- Date/time
- Names of any individuals or staff involved
- Explanation of what was or was not said or done
- Resolution being sought

Complaints regarding Staff

If follow up information is related to staff disciplinary action, the City will inform the complainant that the matter is being investigated or is resolved, but details of the disciplinary action will not be disclosed.

Service Standards

The City will provide an acknowledgement of receipt of their complaint and an assigned tracking number within three business days. This acknowledgement will identify who will be following up on the complaint and provide their contact information.

The City will provide a final response to the complainant within 20 business days. In exceptional circumstances if this timeframe cannot be met, the City will keep the complainant informed of status.

8.0 Further Information

For more information on this policy, please contact:

Customer Service Manager

City of Oshawa

50 Centre St. S., Oshawa, ON L1H 3Z7

905-436-3311

service@oshawa.ca