
Policy: Customer Service, Complaint & Compliment Policy

Main Contact: Clerk

Last Revision: 2019

[Policy Statement](#)

[Purpose Definitions](#)

[Policy Requirements](#)

[Monitoring](#)

[Authority](#)

[Contact](#)

[Change History](#)

Policy Statement

The Corporation of the Township of Whitewater Region strives to provide excellent service to the public, which contributes to continuous improvement of operations.

Purpose

This policy enables the Township of Whitewater Region to provide continuous improvement and open communication with the public in a method and by a process where comments whether positive or negative are dealt with fairly, in a respectful manner, and addressed as quick as possible.

Definitions

In this policy, the following terms have the meanings set out below:

“**CAO**” means the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) or their designate;

“**Complainant**” means the individual filing the complaint with the Township of Whitewater Region;

“**Complaint**” means an expression of dissatisfaction relating to a Township of Whitewater Region program, service or facility;

“**Compliment**” means an expression of approval for a Township of Whitewater program, service or facility;

“**Council**” means the Council of The Township of Whitewater Region;

“**Department Head**” means manager or their designate;

“**Employee**” means the employee of the Township;

“**Feedback and Suggestions**” means an expression of interest in a Township of Whitewater Region program, service or facility or an idea submitted to the Township with the aim of improving programs, services or facilities;

“**Township**” means the Township of Whitewater Region;

“**Ombudsman**” means the Ontario Office of the Ombudsman.

Policy Requirements

1.0 In Person/Face to Face Interactions

1.1 Greeting

Members of the public will be greeted in a polite, friendly manner upon entering any service area.

1.2 Waiting

Members of the public will be notified of expected waiting times, if a member of the public is looking for an out-of-office or unavailable staff member, staff will provide an email to contact the employee if no other staff member is able to assist.

2.0 Phone Interactions

2.1 Business Hours

Phone calls coming in during regular business hours (Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) can be expected to be answered before reaching voicemail. If a voicemail message is left, it can be expected to be generally answered within two business days.

2.2 After Hours/Holidays

Voice messages left when the office is closed will be generally responded to during business hours within two business days.

2.3 Out of Office

Phone calls directed to a staff member who is out-of-office can be expected to be told the length of their absence in their voicemail recording if it is longer than one business day.

“You have reached the office of (name), (position) at extension (XXX). I will be out of office from (date) to (date), and will be unavailable during this time. Please leave your name, contact information and a reason for your call, or for immediate assistance press zero. Thank you.”

2.4 Put on Hold

Members of the public will not be on hold for longer than two minutes without having the option to speak with another staff member or ask for a call back.

3.0 Transfers

3.1 Reasons for a Transfer

Members of the public will be transferred if they have contacted the main phone line but need to speak to someone from a specific department in order to have their question or concern properly addressed. Upon being transferred, the standards for response time apply.

3.2 Number of Transfers

Members of the public should only be transferred once. However, depending on the situation more transfers may be necessary.

3.3 Reasons for Redirection to External Phone Lines

Members of the public can expect to be given contact information to other municipalities, other government agencies or organizations if they are calling for a service provided by another level of government or agency.

4.0 Email Transactions

4.1 Business Hours:

During regular business hours, members of the public can generally expect an email response generally within two business days.

4.2 After Hours/Holidays:

Emails received when the office is closed will be generally responded to during business hours within two business days.

4.3 Out of Office:

Emails sent directed to a staff member who is out-of-office can be expected to be notified that they are not checking emails, and told the length of their absence if the staff member is out of the office for more than one business day. The Out of Office notification will also give contact information to another staff member who might be able to assist them.

5.0 Social Media Interactions

5.1 Responses:

All responses to social media posts and inquiries will be forwarded to the appropriate department for response, if necessary.

6.0 Written Interactions - Letter

6.1 Responses

Members of the public can expect a written acknowledgement within one week with follow-up correspondence as necessary.

7.0 Submitting a Complaint, Compliment, Feedback or Suggestion

All public comments shall generally be submitted in writing and shall include:

- The name phone number and mailing address of the individual
- The nature of the complaint
- Background leading to the issue(s)
- Date(s), time(s), and location(s) of any incident(s) and
- Name(s) of any employee(s) previously contacted regarding the issue(s)
- Any action(s) being requested from the Township.

8.0 Receipt and Knowledge

8.1 All complaints, compliments, feedback and suggestions received by the Township should receive acknowledgment within two business days.

8.2 All compliments, feedback, and suggestions are acknowledged and forwarded to Department Heads.

9.0 Record

9.1 The Department Head shall file a copy of the complaint and resolution with the Clerk. The Clerk shall maintain a file of the complaint in accordance with the Township's record retention by-law. If a municipal employee was the subject of the complaint, a copy of the record shall be retained in their personnel file.

10.0 Investigation

10.1 A Department Head may not delegate the authority to investigate a complaint to an employee who is or may be named in the complaint.

10.2 If a complaint is made against the Department Head, the CAO or designate shall conduct the investigation.

10.3 If a complaint is made against the CAO, the Chair of General Government Committee shall consult with Council and may designate the municipal solicitor, or other qualified individual at arms-length from the Township, to investigate, or conduct the investigation internally.

10.4 The designated investigator shall review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so may:

- Review relevant municipal and provincial legislation;
- Review the Township's relevant policies and procedures;
- Review any existing file documents;
- Interview employees or member of the public involved in the issue;
- Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations;

11.0 Decision

Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of a complaint, the Department Head shall provide a response in writing to the complainant.

The response shall include:

- Whether the complaint was substantiated,
- If the complaint is not substantiated, provide reason(s) for their decision; and,
- Any actions the Township has or will take as a result of the complaint.
- If the Department Head is unable to provide a response within thirty (30) calendar days, they shall notify the complainant of the delay and provide an estimate of when a response will be provided.

12.0 Appeal Process

Once the Township has communicated the decision to the complainant, there is no appeal process at the municipal level. The decision can be appealed to the Ontario Ombudsman for investigation

13.0 Process

Clerk

- Receives written complaint;
- Logs complaint;
- Forwards to appropriate department head;
- Acknowledges receipt to complainant within 7 days;
- Files a copy of the decision;
- Report to General Government Committee annually.

CAO/Mayor:

- Investigate the complaint
- Make a decision
- Notify the complainant of the outcome within fifteen days of the filing of the complaint

Monitoring

All complaints, compliments, feedback and suggestions will be recorded and tracked upon receipt by individual departments, and forwarded to the Clerk for filing.

Authority

Section 224 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* states the role of Council includes the development and evaluation of the policies and programs of the municipality.



Corporate Policy

Contact

Carmen Miller, Clerk
P.O. Box 40, 44 Main Street
Cobden ON K0J 1K0
Email: cmiller@whitewaterregion.ca
Telephone: (613) 646-2282 Ext. 123

Change History

Policy Name	Effective Date	Significant Changes	By-law No.
Customer Service, Complaint & Compliment Policy	December 1, 2019	New Policy	19-12-1229