

**THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LEEDS AND THE**  
**THOUSAND ISLANDS**  
**BY-LAW NO. 22-057**

**BEING A BY-LAW TO ESTABLISH A CUSTOMER COMPLAINT POLICY IN THE TOWNSHIP OF LEEDS AND THE THOUSAND ISLANDS.**

---

**WHEREAS** The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands deems it expedient to establish policies;

**AND WHEREAS** Section 5(3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended, provides that a municipal power, including a municipality's capacity rights, powers and privileges under Section 9, shall be exercised by By-law;

**NOW THEREFORE** The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands hereby enacts as follows:

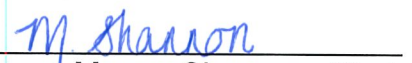
1. **THAT** the Customer Complaint Policy identified as Schedule "A" attached hereto and forming part of this By-Law be hereby approved and adopted;
2. **AND THAT** this By-law shall be known and may be cited as the "Customer Complaint Policy";
3. **AND THAT** this By-law shall come into force and take effect on the day of passing;
4. **AND THAT** any By-law or Resolution passed prior to this by-law which are in contravention of any terms of this by-law are hereby rescinded.

**READ A FIRST AND SECOND TIME THIS 12<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2022.**

**READ A THIRD TIME AND FINALLY PASSED THIS 12<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2022.**

The Corporation of the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Corinna Smith-Gatcke, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Megan Shannon, Clerk



Township of  
**Leeds** and the  
**Thousand Islands**

---

**Policy and Procedure Type: Administration**

**Policy and Procedure Title: Customer Complaint Policy**

**Policy Approval Date: September 12, 2022**

**Review Date:**

---

## **Policy Statement**

This policy is intended to enable the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands (“Township”) to receive complaints promptly and effectively from the public regarding the delivery of programs and services. Customer satisfaction is a priority for the Township, and the Township is committed to satisfying customers’ reasonable expectations in all areas of service. Receiving feedback helps improve processes and can identify areas for improvement. Offering customers opportunities to escalate concerns reinforces a commitment to excellent service delivery.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the underlying principles and processes with respect to complaints related to services delivered by the Township, ensuring, and supporting transparency and accountability. This policy attempts to ensure that any response and review of a complaint is fair, impartial, and respectful to all parties involved.

It is the responsibility of the complainant to attempt to resolve the concern by working with Township employee(s) directly involved with the issue. It is the responsibility of Township staff to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become complaints, and to identify opportunities to improve municipal services. Anonymous complaints will **not** be accepted.

This policy provides a consistent and uniform process to respond to complaints received from the public regarding the dissatisfaction of programs, facilities, Township services, Township employees or operational procedures at the point of service delivery.

By introducing guidelines and standards, the process of managing and resolving complaints will become more efficient allowing staff to respond to complaints in a timely manner and also provide an opportunity to improve Township programs and services.

Section 270(1)5 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended, requires a municipality to be accountable to the public for its actions. This Policy supports the Township's commitment to accountable and transparent municipal operations.

## **Policy Scope**

This Policy applies to all complaints received by staff from the public regarding all municipal actions and functions of the Township. This Policy does **not** apply to:

- A decision of Council or of a Committee of Council
- Internal employee complaints
- Outside boards and agencies including the Leeds and the Thousand Islands Public Library
- Matters addressed by legislation or an existing municipal by-law or policy
- Matters that are handled by tribunals, courts of law, quasi-judicial boards, etc.

This policy does **not** address:

- Enquiries or a specific request for information
- Requests for service
- Complaints about non municipal services
- Suggestions, ideas, or compliments
- Requests for accommodations

This policy applies to all complaints received by staff from the public regarding all administrative actions and functions of the Township.

## **Principles**

This policy and the procedures are based on the following complaint management principles.

- The process should be easy to understand and accessible to customers;
- The process should be well understood by staff with appropriate oversight by senior management to ensure complaints are addressed appropriately;
- Customer should have confidence in the reliability of the process;
- Customer complaints will be kept confidential;
- The process should be fair and include a review process;
- The process should be impartial and filing a complaint will not adversely impact the quality of future services;
- Staff should address issues within their authority and capacity. Customer should be advised of options to resolve the complaint;
- Staff should have the discretion to adjust and adapt their response based on the nature of the complaint;
- Complaints should be addressed in a timely manner.

## Definitions

**Complainant** means the person who is dissatisfied and is filing the complaint. Anyone who uses or is affected by Township services can make a complaint.

**Complaint** means an expression of dissatisfaction related to Township programs, services, facilities, Township employee or operational procedures where it is believed that the Township has not provided a service experience to the customer's satisfaction at the point of service delivery and a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

**Compliment** means an expression of appreciation for satisfactory or above-satisfactory service.

**Enquiry** is defined as a general or specific request for information regarding a municipal program, service or facility.

**Feedback** means input that is neither positive, nor negative, but provides ideas.

**Frivolous** means a Complaint that is reasonably perceived by Township staff to be:

- a) without reasonable or probable cause,
- b) without merit or substance, or
- c) trivial

**Harassment** or to **Harass** involves engaging in a course of behaviour, comment or conduct, whether it occurs inside or outside the work environment, that is or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. It includes but is not limited to any behaviour, conduct or comment that is directed at or is offensive to another person:

- a) on the grounds of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, age, handicap, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status, as well as any other grounds under the provisions of the Human Rights Code; or
- b) which is reasonably perceived by the recipient as an intention to bully, embarrass, intimidate or ridicule the recipient.

**Intimidation** means unwarranted conduct, including, but not limited to: cyberbullying, discrimination, harassment, violence or threats of violence, profanity, personal insults or communication that is deemed threatening.

**Ombudsman** means the Ombudsman of Ontario, or the Ombudsman appointed by Council in accordance with Section 223.13 (1) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended where applicable.

**Service Request** means a request made to the Township for a specific service.

**Township** means the Corporation of the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands.

**Vexatious** means a Complaint that is Frivolous, and which is pursued in a manner that is reasonably perceived by Township staff to be

- a) malicious,
- b) intended to embarrass or harass the recipient, or

- c) intended to be a nuisance

## **Complaint Procedure**

### **Informal Complaint**

The Township encourages complaints to be resolved at the informal complaint stage. This can be accomplished by working with municipal staff to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal complaints. Informal complaints may be made in person, by phone, letter, email, or fax.

It is the responsibility of Township staff to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become formal complaints and identify opportunities to improve programs and services.

### **Formal Complaint**

A formal complaint is generated when an informal resolution cannot be successfully achieved. This will result in a file generated, investigation conducted, and decision rendered.

Formal Complaints must be made in writing and filed as soon as possible. A formal complaint may be made in one of the following ways:

- Online through the Township website on the [Accountability and Transparency](#) webpage using the Customer Complaint Form;
- Written complaints may be filed by hand delivery, mail, fax, or email. A formal complaint shall include the following components:
  - Contact details of the complainant including preference for future contact (email/mail/phone);
  - Employee(s) and department(s) involved with the complaint;
  - Summary of complaint including details, location, and any relevant notes regarding the complaint;
  - Date of incident; and
  - Desired resolution to the complaint.
- Where a complainant requires an accommodation in submitting a formal written complaint, please contact the Clerk's office who will endeavour to make the necessary arrangements.

Examples of Complaints:

The following are some examples of the types of complaints that fall under this policy. This list is not exhaustive.

- Complaints about receiving poor customer service;
- Complaints about the quality of a service provided;
- Timeliness in responding to a complaint; and
- Concern that a matter was not completed or carried out in accordance with Township Policies and By-laws.

All complaints should be filed as soon as possible after the related incident.

## **Complaint Process**

### **Step 1: Acknowledge**

Staff will acknowledge the complainant within five (5) business days and provide an estimate of the time to resolve or follow up on the matter.

### **Step 2: Assess**

If required, contact the complainant to clarify the complaint.

### **Step 3: Assign**

Forward the complaint to the correct department.

### **Step 4: Investigate**

The staff member will:

- a. Document all notes;
- b. Maintain regular communication with the complainant throughout the process; and
- c. Review the complaint and related issues, speak to staff as required, identify relevant legislation, policies, and procedures, and identify actions based on the review.

### **Step 5: Resolve**

Provide written resolution within thirty (30) days. The decision will include an overview of the complaint, outline of the investigation, summary of the facts and findings, identify next steps and suggested resolution and supporting rationale. The decision should be reviewed by the respective department head(s).

### **Step 6: Corporate Review**

The CAO, Clerk or respective designate will review the written resolution to ensure accuracy and completeness, clarity of response, fairness, and opportunities for service delivery improvements.

### **Step 7: Appeal**

Once the Township has communicated the decision, there is no appeal process at the municipal level. In the event complaints cannot be resolved through the Municipality's complaint process, they may be submitted to the Ombudsman.

## **Tracking and Reporting**

All complaints must be tracked from initial receipt to resolution. Complaints must be entered and tracked through the Township's service request software. All supporting documentation, notes and related correspondence should be saved within the service request.

The personal information provided on the Customer Complaint Form is collected under the authority of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*. The information provided will be used to investigate the complaint and may be used for contact purposes but is otherwise considered confidential. Questions about this collection can be directed to the Clerk's Department.

### **Potentially Frivolous or Vexatious Complaints**

Where the complaint may be considered frivolous or vexatious or there appears to be a pattern of frivolous or vexatious complaints, the staff member should see advice from their department head and from the CAO. The CAO may recommend that the complaint be referred to the Ombudsman.

### **Threats and Intimidation**

Staff should immediately report any implied or explicit threats, any intimidating behaviour and/or any harassing or discriminatory behaviour to their department head. The department head will consult with the CAO and the Human Resources Manager to review and deal with any matters in contravention of applicable legislation and/or Township policies.

### **Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed by the Clerk or designate during the term of Council to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with legislation and current business processes, or as required based on legislative changes.

## Customer Complaint Flow Chart

