

Village of Merrickville-Wolford Complaint Handling Policy

Goals of the policy

This policy has been designed to assist both the public and staff. The Village of Merrickville-Wolford is committed to consistent, fair, and confidential complaint handling and to resolving complaints as quickly as possible. The aim is to ensure the public will be treated consistently and in a timely manner.

Definition of a complaint

Complaints are defined as any expression of dissatisfaction or notice concerning lack of service by a member of the public in relation to municipal business.

Keeping record of complaints

Verbal complaints should be transcribed to the “Complaint Form” and verified by the Complainant to ensure accuracy prior to being placed on record in the Complaint Policy Folder. The Staff member who takes the details will initiate the process and keep record of the complaint on file.

When taking a complaint, staff will record the name and contact details of the complainant, as well as full details of the complaint including the date. Details of all communication with the complainant and any actions to resolve the complaint will be recorded in the same place.

Complaints on record will also be monitored for any ongoing trends by management and efforts made to resolve any ongoing issues.

Personal details or details of their complaint will not be divulged to third parties unless written consent is obtained.

Informing complainant of progress

Every attempt will be made to resolve complaints within 5 business workdays. Written complaints will be acknowledged promptly.

Complainants will be given an approximate timeframe at the time they make their complaint and will be informed of the progress of their complaint regularly, especially if there are any delays or changes to what has been agreed.

Complaints Procedure

All those making a complaint will be treated with courtesy. Where possible, complaints will be resolved at the first point of contact. Complaints will still be noted and placed on file.

Oral Complaints

- Council members receiving an oral complaint should direct the complaint to the CAO.

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- Front line staff receiving an oral complaint should seek the assistance of the appropriate department to ensure a timely follow up to the issue.
- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous, and sympathetic.
- It is the expectation that Municipal Employees will be treated in a respectful manner, front line staff are to seek assistance from the Department Head or CAO, and should this be otherwise, the complaint will not be brought forward.

Written Complaints

- When a written complaint is received it should be provided on the specified “Complaint Form” signed by the Complainant and recorded in the complaints folder then passed as soon as possible, to the appropriate department. Either the CAO, Finance, Building, Fire Chief or Public Works Manager will deal with the complaint through the process. The Department Head will contact the complainant via telephone or through email, for further details and follow up. These actions will be recorded in the Complaints Policy Folder.
- An acknowledgement to the complainant will be issued within five (5) working days.
- The CAO will be provided with all complaints on record.

What the CAO, Clerk or the Department Head will do

Wherever practical:

- Get an accurate report of the complaint.
- Make no judgements.
- Explain the complaint procedure.
- Find out how you would like it handled.
- Determine who is the appropriate person to handle the complaint or appoint someone to investigate.
- Find whether the complaint has substance.
- Monitor the situation.

Escalation of complaints

If the complaint cannot be resolved immediately, the complainant will be given a timeframe, a contact person, and details of our complaint handling process.

Where possible, the Department Head assigned the complaint details will be the contact person.

Documentation

Records, notes, or reports will:

- Be kept confidential.
- Be filed in a confidential system with limited access.