



TOWNSHIP OF MONTAGUE

Customer Service Policy

Approval Date: August 18th, 2015

Purpose

This policy is intended to enable the Township to promptly and effectively address program and service delivery concerns raised by members of the public. The policy will assist the Township in providing excellent service to the public, and contribute to continuous improvement of operations. The Township strives to reduce customer dissatisfaction by:

- Providing timely and accurate response to complaints;
- Using complaints as an opportunity to improve program and service delivery reviews.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, a complaint must be differentiated from a request for service or a request for information. This policy is meant to address only the process for complaints.

On a daily basis, citizens and customers contact staff for a variety of reasons. Generally, there are three categories these interactions can fall into.

1. Request for information
Citizens contact the Township to request information for a wide variety of information, including municipal policies, services and many other items. These enquiries are routine in nature.
2. Reports/Requests for Service
Often citizens will call or approach staff members to report a specific issue or request service. These issues are typically minor in nature and can be addressed using a "Frontline Resolution" approach in accordance with existing Township Policies. An example of a request for service could be a report of a loose dog on a municipal highway, or a pothole on a road.
3. Complaints
Complaints can be typically defined as an issue or concern raised with a municipal program, service or operation that is not resolved at the time of the incident and for which the complainant submits their concerns in accordance with this policy. Complaints can include but are not limited to:
 - a. Failure of an issue to be addressed

- b. Employee conduct issue
- c. Property standards

Application

1. Role of Council

The role of council is to develop general policies and directives on how to enforce issues of the municipality. The policies are typically set by Bylaw. Council operates in an environment of respect and professional behavior and would expect the same in return.

It shall be understood that a complainant cannot seek a remedy by contacting Council member(s).

Operational Inquiries/Complaints

- a. Members of Council who are approached by the public with inquiries/complaints regarding operational matters should inform the party to contact the Township office and file an official inquiry/complaint which will then be forwarded to the appropriate department for review/resolution.
- b. Where the member of the public is reluctant to contact the Township office directly, the member of Council should take the person's name, phone number and details of the inquiry/complaint and advise them that the matter will be referred to the C.A.O. for review/resolution.

Policy Inquiries/Complaints

- a. If a member of the public approaches a member of Council with an enquiry concerning policy issues decided by the Council, they should be requested to put the issue in writing to Council and forward it to the Clerk so that it can be considered by Council at their next meeting.
- b. Where the member of the public is reluctant to put their concern in writing, the members of Council may request the issue be placed on a Council agenda for consideration.

2. Role of Staff

Staff members are responsible for interacting with in a professional, courteous and objective manner in all interactions.

The Township's employees are the ambassadors of the Township. Thus, each employee must be conscious of the Township's public duty and their part in the discharge of that duty. They are expected to conduct themselves with the highest degree of ethical behaviour and integrity.

Staff are encouraged to resolve all issues as timely as possible using either the written complaint form or the frontline resolution process as laid out in this policy.

Procedure

Frontline Resolution

It is the responsibility of the complainant to attempt to resolve concerns by dealing with employees directly involved with the issue where appropriate.

It is the responsibility of all employees to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become complaints, and identify opportunities to improve municipal services.

Complaint

Where a frontline resolution cannot be achieved, complaints should be submitted to staff on the attached Customer Complaint Form forming Schedule A. All complaints should include:

- Name and contact information of the person submitting the complaint
- Nature of the complaint including:
 - Background leading to the issue
 - Date/time and location of issue/incident
- Any action being requested of the municipality

Staff shall forward the written complaint to the appropriate staff member or manager, by department. Any complaints concerning individual employees shall be forwarded directly to the CAO.

The responsible staff member, upon receipt of a complaint form shall:

- Review or consult any appropriate policy or procedure
- Follow-up with the complainant within a reasonable time period being no more than 5 business days
- Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or to improve operations, or;
- Take other actions deemed expedient to resolving the matter

The resolved complaint form shall be filed with the front desk when resolved to the complainant and staff's satisfaction.

At the discretion of staff, Council may be notified of an open complaint investigation for information only. In the cases that a complaint has indicated a deficiency or improvement in a municipal policy, staff may recommend policy changes to be approved by Council.

Exclusions

This policy is not meant to address:

- a. Complaints about non-municipal services;
- b. Issues already addressed by legislation, existing municipal bylaw, policy or procedure;
- c. A decisions of Council or Committees of Council; or
- d. Internal employee complaints.

It is important to note that Council should not comment on or provide information about any specific staff member to members of the public. Issues related to the conduct of employees should immediately be forwarded to the CAO to be addressed internally. The CAO and staff have no obligation to disclose the results or conclusion of any complaint regarding an employee including any disciplinary action taken against any employee.

Reference & Related Policies

Council Code of Conduct

Employee Code of Conduct

Accessibility – Customer Service Standards Policy

Review Cycle

Yearly