



Guidelines for Complaints Management

The Region of Waterloo is committed to handling complaints in a timely and customer focused manner. If you are dissatisfied with a program or service provided by the Region, please call us at 519-575-4400 (TTY:519-575-4608) or send us an email at regionalinquiries@regionofwaterloo.ca.

The following Guidelines are the basis of the Region's approach to managing complaints:

1. Citizen focused

We will deal with complaints promptly and in a manner that meets customer expectations. The process will be flexible enough to meet the needs of different people.

2. Continuous service improvement

We will use complaints information to improve service design and delivery and ensure that systems are in place to record, analyze and report on the lessons learned from complaints.

3. Compliance

In managing complaints, we will act in accordance with the law and relevant legislative requirements, with regard for the rights of those concerned.

4. Simple and visible

We will publicize complaints procedures with simple and clear instructions for citizens wishing to make a complaint.

5. Accessible and inclusive

Citizens will be able to access the complaints process at any point during service delivery via various channels. If requested, alternate formats including language interpreter services will be provided to citizens wishing to make a complaint.

6. Fair and impartial

Concerns will be dealt with in an open-minded and impartial way. Making a complaint will not negatively impact future dealings with the Region. Citizens will not be discriminated against during the investigation of a complaint or as a result of

complaining. Staff about whom a complaint is launched will be treated as fairly as complainants.

7. Accountable

We will provide honest, evidence-based explanations and give reasons for decisions. Information will be provided in a clear and open way. When requested and appropriate, we will inform complainants about the lessons learnt and changes made to the service.

8. Responsive

We will acknowledge and resolve complaints in a timely manner.

9. Private

Protecting the privacy of complainants and staff is of utmost importance. Information will be collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)* and the *Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)*.

Definition and Scope

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction (or concern) for which resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. A complaint can relate to:

- Regional programs or services;
- Failure to meet our set standard of service;
- Staff behaviour;
- Any action or lack of action by staff affecting an individual or group.

A complaint can be written, spoken or submitted by another method of communication. It can be made by one or more members of the public.

A complaint is distinct from:

- an initial request for service;
- a formal appeal against a decision for which the procedure is set out in legislation or regulation;
- a means to change legislation or policy;
- a general or specific request for information regarding a Region of Waterloo program or service that is resolved at the point of service delivery (enquiry);
- an opinion, comment or expression of interest in a program or service (feedback);
- ideas submitted with the aim of improving services, programs, products or processes (suggestions).