



Corporation of the Township of Black River - Matheson
 429 Park Lane
 P.O. Box 601
 Matheson, Ontario
 P0K 1N0

(69.)

RESOLUTION

DATE: January 7, 2019

NO: 2019 - _____

MOVED BY:

Councillor Dubien	Councillor Gibson	Councillor Cumming
Councillor De Marchi	Councillor Charlebois	Councillor Riach

SECONDED BY:

Councillor Dubien	Councillor Gibson	Councillor Cumming
Councillor De Marchi	Councillor Charlebois	Councillor Riach

THAT Council adopts the Complaint Handling Policy.

CARRIED DEFEATED

MAYOR'S SIGNATURE

Recorded Vote-TO BE COMPLETED BY CLERK ONLY

	YEAS	NAYS
Councillor Dubien		
Councillor Gibson		
Councillor Cumming		
Councillor De Marchi		
Councillor Charlebois		
Councillor Riach		
Mayor Laderoute		

X

 Cassandra Child
 Clerk



**Township of
Black River – Matheson**
January 7, 2019

**Report ADMIN-02-2019
Of the Deputy Clerk
For Consideration by Council**

RE: Action Report

OBJECTIVE: To approve the Complaint Handling Policy for the Township of Black River-Matheson

RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS:

1. THAT:
 - a. Council adopt the Complaint Handling Policy for the Township of Black River-Matheson.
 - b. Council takes this report as information only.

Respectfully submitted:
Katie Browne

Handwritten signature of Katie Browne in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Approved:

Chief Administrative Officer / Dir. Economic
Development

Handwritten signature of the Chief Administrative Officer in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Cassandra Child
Director Corporate Services

Handwritten signature of Cassandra Child in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

BACKGROUND:

A complaint handling process within a municipality allows for community members to provide input, feedback and recommendations. The Township of Black River-Matheson recognizes the importance of public feedback and the value it adds to this community. The current complaint handling process within the township of Black River-Matheson consists of, taking the complaint (verbal, written or electronic), entering it into an excel spreadsheet and notifying the appropriate department head. Our current system has no policy or procedure set in place to ensure all formal complaints are being addressed in a time appropriate manner. There is not a designated individual appointed to deal with complaints or to ensure proper channels are followed. In the case that a complaint is brought to the township, if that individual does not document it in the appropriate manner the risk of it not being addressed increases and therefore no accountability is taken.

DISCUSSION:

The complaint handling process will ensure that formal complaints made to the Township office will be recognized and adhered to in a timely manner.

The Municipality of the Township of Black River-Matheson will only respond to formal complaints received from a complainant who shall provide their full name, telephone number and address. The Clerk's department is responsible for ensuring the receipt, tracking and response of all complaints. They will monitor compliance with this policy and will follow up with the appropriate departments as required. They are responsible for implementation and ongoing compliance with the Complaint Handling Policy.

The department heads are responsible for facilitating prompt response to all complaints by their staff to ensure that service standards are achieved. They hold responsibility for departmental compliance to the Complaint Handling Policy.

The new complaint handling process will use our current GIS mapping system to document all formal complaints within the municipality rather than an excel spreadsheet. All staff have access to the mapping system and will be able to review the active complaints as they are received. The Clerk's department will be responsible for the management of the complaint handling process and will ensure all appropriate departments are notified in the case of a complaint for their department. The designate from the Clerk's department will go into the mapping system once a week and email all department heads who currently have outstanding complaints to action.

As we implement the new complaint handling process, it is expected that this policy will require minor modifications as it develops over time. It will be at the discretion of the CAO or Clerk's department that if small details to this policy need to be implemented or removed to ensure accuracy and efficiency, this shall be done without the consent of council. If any major change to this policy is required, a modified policy will be brought to council for adoption.

HIGHLIGHTS:

A new complaint form has been created for all residents of Black River-Matheson to fill out in the case they have a formal complaint they would like addressed. This complaint form will be located on the Black River-Matheson website and at the Township office. Once a formal complaint has been submitted, an "Acknowledgement of Complaint" letter will be sent to the resident informing them that the matter has been recognized and will be actioned within (30) calendar days.

In addition, the Clerk's department will have an automated telephone system that will have a designated line for all complaints. This will ensure all complaints are going to one central location, monitored and delegated by the Clerk's department.

All personal information collected on this form is collected under the authority of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). The information submitted will be used for the purpose of investigating the complaint.

WORK PLAN:

This level of service will place more demand on staff. Though staff can currently manage this process, in the event the receptionist role is filled in the future, this task may be alleviated.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

All department heads and staff will be notified and trained on the new complaint handling process to ensure the same message is being conveyed. The municipality will be notified of the new complaint form accessible to all residents and how formal complaints will be addressed going forward.

BUDGET/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

The GIS mapping system is already a tool in place within the municipality, therefore, no additional costs will be acquired for implementation of this product. The additional cost would be staff time.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL IMPACTS:

Each department within the Township of Black River-Matheson will be held accountable for all complaints in their residing department. The GIS mapping system will track each individual formal complaint. Once a complaint is entered into the GIS tracking system, it will be highlighted in red to indicate that it is currently in process. Once this complaint has been actioned and addressed the status will be changed to complete and remain in the tracking system, colour coded as green to demonstrate complete.

ATTACHMENT:

- Complain Handling Policy
- Complaint Form
- Acknowledgment of Complaint Form
- Resolved Complaint Letter

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLANS:

Based on the Strategic Plan for the Township of Black River-Matheson, the complaint handling policy coincides with our “Vision”. *Residents will be engaged in making their community a better place to live and businesses will be provided with the opportunity and the environment to grow and thrive.*

RECOMMENDATION:

A complaint handling policy that is organized, efficient and provides accountability is what the Township of Black River-Matheson requires. This policy ensures that the concerns and recommendations made by the community are held to high standards and in turn contributes to the health, happiness and safety of our residents. Having one central channel for complaints provides increased accuracy and better management of complaints. The GIS tracking system allows for a cost-efficient approach, one that is being used throughout municipalities for their formal complaint tracking. It is the recommendation that Council adopts the Complaint Handling Policy for the Township of Black River-Matheson.

REQUIRED AND RECEIVED COMMENTS FROM: Yes or Not applicable	
CAO	Yes
Clerk	Yes
Finance	Yes
Building Control & MLEO Department	Yes
Public Works & Environmental Department	Yes
Parks, Recreation & Facilities Department	Yes
Community Development and Tourism	N/A
Planning Department	N/A
Economic Development Department	NA
Fire Department	Yes
Other:	N/A

**The Corporation of the
Township of Black River-Matheson**



Policies and Procedures

Operational

Complaint Handling Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

The Municipality of the Township of Black River-Matheson is committed to a consistent, uniform, prompt and courteous process to respond to formal complaints within a reasonable amount of time. This policy is intended for the municipality to promptly address concerns raised by the public regarding, which shall include but not be limited to, by-law infractions, road conditions, programs, facilities, municipal services, staff or operational procedures. This policy outlines the steps, procedures and process to be followed and service standards for the handling of formal complaints.

The Municipality of the Township of Black River-Matheson will only respond to formal complaints received from a complainant who shall provide their full name, telephone number and address.

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and other applicable legislation. All participants in the complaint process shall keep the details of the complaint confidential except as may be required by law. All complainants will be treated with respect and will not receive adverse treatment or any form of reprisal.

PURPOSE

To provide a formal policy and procedure governing the handling of complaints received by the municipality and to ensure thorough, prompt and courteous receipt, processing, investigation and resolution are adhered to.

The Municipality also recognizes the importance of public feedback and welcomes complaints as a valuable form of feedback regarding our services, operations, town employees and facilities. The information gained from complaints helps improve the quality of the services provided by the Municipality and the client experience of residents.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all union and non-union employees of the Corporation.

The Corporation of the
Township of Black River-Matheson



Policies and Procedures

Operational

Complaint Handling Policy

This policy applies to all formal complaints that are received.

This policy does not apply to:

- Anonymous complaints, hearsay or third party.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff: Employees are to have knowledge and awareness of the municipality's requirement to receive complaints, the process through which a complaint can be made and the service standards that apply to complaints.

CAO or designate: The CAO or designate is responsible to monitor reports and receive input to ensure all staff and Department Heads are following the established Complaint Handling Policy and that service standards are being achieved. The CAO or designate is also responsible for ensuring the receipt, tracking and response of all complaints. They will monitor compliance with this policy and will follow up with the appropriate departments as required. They shall terminate an investigation if they are of the opinion that the matter is frivolous, vexatious or not made in good faith, or that there are no grounds or insufficient grounds for an investigation. They are responsible for implementation and ongoing compliance with the Complaint Handling Policy. It will be at the discretion of the CAO or Clerk's department, that if small modifications to this policy need to be implemented to ensure accuracy and efficiency, this shall be done without the consent of council.

Department heads: The department heads are responsible for facilitating prompt response to all complaints by their staff to ensure that service standards are achieved. They hold responsibility for departmental compliance to the Complaint Handling Policy.

DEFINITIONS

CAO means the Chief Administrative Officer of the Corporation of the Township of Black River-Matheson or it's designate.

ANONYMOUS means a complaint submitted with no complainant details including name, phone number and address.

CLERK means the Clerk appointed by Council of the Corporation of the Township of Black River-Matheson.

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Policies and Procedures

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COMPLAINANT means the person filing the complaint.

COUNCIL means the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Black River-Matheson.

DEPARTMENT HEAD means statutory officer, officer or Director of the Township of Black River-Matheson.

FORMAL COMPLAINT means a complaint, wherein the complainant provides their full name, address and phone number that can be verified and nature of complaint in writing using the required form.

MUNICIPALITY means the Corporation of the Township of Black River-Matheson.

SPITE/VEXATIOUS COMPLAINT means a complaint filed in ill will or with the intent of malice towards another person and may include retaliatory complaints and neighbor disputes.

STAFF means any employee of the Municipality.

POLICY DETAILS

1. GENERAL COMPLAINTS

The Municipality will only respond to formal complaints received from complainants who provide their full name, address, telephone number as well as the address of the complaint and details regarding the nature of the complaint.

Anonymous calls will be entered into the Complaint Tracking Log, but no formal action will be taken unless the complaint concerns an immediate threat to health and safety.

An identified complainant's personal information shall be kept confidential in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, unless permission to release such information is provided by the complainant in writing or the complainant is required as a witness in a court or a hearing or tribunal.

Formal complaints, at the discretion of a Department Head, may require the complainant to fill out the prescribed complaint form.

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2. SPITE/VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

Spite/vexatious complaints will be entered into the Complaint Tracking Log but not investigated unless it is deemed to be an immediate threat to health and safety.

In situations, whereby multiple complaints are received from a single person at one time, or where a single person continuously submits a variety of complaints on an ongoing basis, the Department Head will decide on an appropriate level of response to such complaints. The level of response may include a decision to act on some or all the complaints, to not act on some or all the complaints, or to assign priority to some or all the complaints. If a decision not to act is reached, this will be conveyed to the complainant in writing.

In making their decision on the appropriate level of response to such complaints, staff will have regard to the following criteria:

- Safety factors;
- Available resources;
- Potential impact on the complainant;
- Potential impact of not responding;
- Impact on the immediate neighborhood;
- Complaints that appear to result from a form of vendetta or retribution, or are otherwise deemed to be frivolous and vexatious;
- Offer for formal remediation;
- Coordinating involvement with other relevant agencies.

In situations where staff are involved in a dispute between two or more people, where it has become obvious that staff's involvement will not be able to achieve a reasonable resolution to their dispute, staff are given the discretion to decide, upon consultation with the department heads, on an appropriate level of further involvement. The level of involvement may include a decision to suspend further involvement or take no further action in the dispute and will be conveyed to the complainant in writing.

In making their decision as to the level or further involvement with the dispute, staff will have regard to the following criteria:

- Safety factors;
- History of attempts to mediate by staff;
- Offer for formal mediation;
- Coordinating involvement with other relevant agencies;
- The number of unfounded complaints;
- Apparent attempts to purposely aggravate the situations;

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- The number of complaints or concerns registered that do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Municipality's by-laws.

3. PRIORITY

Staff will respond to Formal Complaints on a reactive basis. A Department Head may also respond to an informal complaint where the complainant has not provided the required name, address and telephone number if they believe the concern to be of immediate threat to health and safety.

Any criminal complaint that is received by the township will be addressed to the O.P.P. immediately.

A Department Head may also undertake a proactive investigation upon observation of a possible situation where the matter is of an immediate threat to health and safety.

Any decision made under this policy including a decision not to respond to complaints, maybe revisited at any time. A decision of the Department Head in this respect will not bind another. Additionally, the department heads may, at their discretion, require staff to respond to a complaint in spite of any previous decision to the contrary.

PROCEDURE

1. RECEIPT AND CONFIRMATION OF COMPLAINT

All complaints will be recorded and distributed through the Clerk's department. Upon receipt of a Formal Complaint, the Clerk's department shall record the complaint in the Complaint Tracking Log maintained in the municipality's GIS Mapping System. In all cases, the Clerk's department shall encourage the complainant to describe the matter in their own words, detailing the "who", "what", "why", "when", and "where" of the situation.

The Clerk's office shall on a daily basis check the Complaint Tracking Log on the Municipality's mapping system to ensure complaints are being responded to and shall assign the complaint to the appropriate staff member.

When a formal complaint is received, the Clerk's department will send an acknowledgment letter to the complainant indicating that the municipality received the complaint and a response will be provided within 30 calendar days.

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The Clerk's office conducts a preliminary review of the complaint to verify information and research any supporting documentation which may be available in Municipal records.

The Clerk's office or other designated staff will call the complainant, when necessary, for further details or to confirm or clarify information provided within the Formal Complaint.

2. INVESTIGATION

The Department Head shall attend the site to witness and record the activity to determine if an issue exists. If the Department Head determines the matter is not an issue, the Department Head will advise the complainant, enter the resolution date and details onto the Complaint Tracking Log and close the file.

If it is found that there is an issue, the Department Head shall take the necessary steps to have the issue resolved as quickly as possible.

3. ENFORCEMENT – FIRST STAGE

If the Department Head determines that a violation exists, they may proceed as follows:

- i. In the case of situations wherein Council has established set fines for violations, a Department Head may, upon confirmation of the existence of a violation, at their discretion, immediately issue an offence notice/ticket; or
- ii. Shall provide an initial warning to the violator in person, by telephone or in writing which shall provide a time in which voluntary compliance is expected.

The Department Head shall notify any internal department and outside agencies that may have jurisdiction or may be required to assist with or rectify the situation including, but not limited to, the Fire Department, Planning Department, Public Works, Porcupine Health Unit, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of the Environment or the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Where provided by by-law or other statute, a Department Head may issue an emergency order to remedy a violation in lieu of an initial warning if the situation poses an immediate threat to health and safety.



4. ENFORCEMENT – SECOND STAGE

If any warning or order has not been complied with, the Department Head may determine whether to attempt a second written warning or proceed with the actions necessary to address the situation in accordance with municipal bylaws or other statutes. Either:

- i. A second written warning or formal order is to be issued, in which case, the Department Head will proceed giving a final time period in which to comply; or
- ii. If legal action is decided, the Department Head will provide the Clerk with a recommendation to proceed with legal action when it appears obvious compliance is not forthcoming.

At any stage of the enforcement process, if, in the opinion of the Officer that the matter is of significant consequence, the matter may be brought before Council for direction.

DOCUMENTS

N/A

FORMS

Form 1 - Complaint Form
Form 2 - Acknowledgement of Complaint
Form 3 – Resolved Complaint Letter

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Policy Name: Complaint Handling Policy

Issue Date:

Approved by:

Approval Date: COUNCIL



**The Corporation of the
Township of Black River-Matheson
Complaint Form**

The Township of Black River-Matheson is committed to promptly addressing the concerns of our Municipality, which will include, but not limited to by-law infractions, road conditions, programs, facilities, municipal services, staff or operational procedures. Please be advised that The Township of Black River-Matheson will only respond to formal complaints received from a complainant who shall provide their full name, telephone number and address. All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection Privacy Act.

COMPLAINANT CONTACT DETAILS

First Name *	Last Name *
Email Address *	
Mailing Address *	Phone Number *

COMPLAINT TYPE

- Access of Services
- Programs
- Facilities
- Staff Conduct
- Processes or Procedure
- Other

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINT

Please provide information on what happened, who was involved, dates, times and photos if available. Please provide as much detail of the situation.

<p>Details:</p>



**The Corporation of the
Township of Black River-Matheson
Complaint Form**

Location of incident
Staff persons involved (if known and applicable)
Please include any documentation in support of complaint

RESOLVE

How do you suggest the complaint be resolved?

SIGNATURE

Complaint's signature
Date Complaint submitted (mm/dd/yyyy)

NOTICE OF COLLECTION

All personal information collected on this form is collected under the authority of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). The information submitted will be used for the purpose of investigating the complaint.

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

Date complaint received: (mm/dd/yyyy)	Receiver Initials:
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Acknowledgment of Complaint



Township of Black River-Matheson
429 Park Lane
Matheson, Ontario, P0K 1N0
705-273-2313

INSERT DATE

NAME
ADDRESS

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs _____,

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns regarding XXXX. Your written complaint was received by the municipality on INSERT DATE RECEIVED.

We will provide a response within (30) Calendar days of receiving your complaint.

If you have any questions regarding the process, please do not hesitate to contact myself, Katie Browne at deputyclerk@blackriver-matheson.com or 705-273-2313.

Sincerely,

Katie Browne
Deputy Clerk

c.c John Regan-CAO



Township of Black River-Matheson
429 Park Lane
Matheson, Ontario, P0K 1N0
705-273-2313

INSERT DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs _____,

Thank you for taking the time to inform us of your concerns regarding XXXXX, on INSERT DATE RECIEVED. Please be advised that your written complaint has since been resolved by staff on INSERT DATE RESOLVED.

If you have any questions regarding the process, please do not hesitate to contact myself, Katie Browne at deputyclerk@blackriver-matheson.com or 705-273-2313.

Sincerely,

Katie Browne
Deputy Clerk

c.c John Regan-CAO