

POLICY ON HANDLING COMPLAINTS

Purpose: The Township of Rochester hereby adopts this policy for the intent of handling complaints consistently in the future and to balance the needs of all of its citizens.

Anonymous complaints are defined as a complaint or concern received either in a written or verbal form which is from a person who does not wish to be named or go on the record. This policy attempts to balance various legal and procedural issues against the need for protecting the rights of both parties of the complaint.

1. All complaints should be addressed by the proper personnel having the authority authorized by either local ordinance or other laws.
2. Anonymous complaints should be assigned the lowest priority for investigation for a number of practical and legal reasons:
 - A. Frequently anonymous complaints are without merit. They are often the result of personal disputes. The Township of Rochester should not be wasting its resources on investigating baseless complaints. The Township of Rochester is not obligated to do any follow up on anonymous complaints.
 - B. To properly investigate a complaint it is often necessary for the authority having jurisdiction to obtain additional or clarifying information from the complainant. It is also vital to close the circle and inform the complainant when there is not a violation so they both understand the issue and the Borough's response and position. This follow-up is impossible if the complainant wishes to remain anonymous.
3. Complainants shall be encouraged to file a written complaint.
4. All complaints whether formal or anonymous must be addressed by the appropriate personnel or authority having jurisdiction.
5. No legal actions shall be taken against homeowners/property owners based on anonymous complaints unless approved or directed by Township of Rochester Manager or Township of Rochester Commissioner.
6. Complaints that are of a serious health or safety issue must be handled as quickly as possible.
7. Complaints that concern what appears to be of a serious imminent threat to an individual's safety or well-being or imminent environmental issue must take precedence over all other concerns.
8. Section 708(b) EXCEPTIONS of the Pennsylvania's New Right to Know Law (act 3 of 2008) excepts non-disclosure of complainants information.