

TOWN OF SHAPLEIGH
COMPLAINT RESPONSE POLICY

This policy is intended to enable the Town to promptly and effectively address program and service delivery complaints **raised by members of the public**. This policy provides the mechanism to respond to complaints and will assist the Town in providing excellent customer service to the public, and contribute to continuous improvement of operations.

Definitions-

Complainant: the individual filing the complaint with the Town

Complaint: an issue or concern raised regarding Municipal program, service, or operation that is not resolved at the time the complainant submits their complaint to the Town in accordance with this policy. A complaint is distinct from:

- Request for service: *For example; requesting road repairs*
- Inquiry: a general or specific request for information regarding a Town product or service made by a resident that is resolved at the point of service
- Feedback: an opinion, comment and expression of interest in a Town of Shapleigh program or service

Hearsay: Information received from someone else that one cannot adequately substantiate as they have not personally witnessed the action, *rumor*.

Procedures-

- 1) Responsibility of the Complainant/Employee
 - a. It is the responsibility of the complainant to attempt to resolve their concerns by dealing directly with the employee(s) to within the Department providing the service, up to an including the Department Head
 - b. It is the responsibility of the employee(s) to attempt to resolve issues or concerns before they become complaints, and identify opportunities to improve Municipal services.

2) Filing a Complaint

Where resolution cannot be achieved, complaints should be submitted in writing to the Town Administrator. Complaints shall be submitted on the form attached as Schedule “A” to this policy, and will include:

- a. The name, phone number, email address, and mailing address of the complainant;

- b. The nature of the complaint, including the:
 - i. Background leading to the complaint;
 - ii. Date(s), time(s) and locations(s) of any incident(s); and
 - iii. Name of any employee previously contacted regarding the complaint; and,
- c. Actions the complainant is requesting of the Town.

3) Upon Receipt of a Complaint

3.1 The Town Administrator shall acknowledge the receipt of the complaint within 5 business days of receipt of the complaint.

3.2 The Town Administrator shall at direction of or in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen (BOS), review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so *may*:

- a. Review relevant Town, State, and Federal Laws and Ordinances;
- b. Review the Town's relevant policies and procedures;
- c. Review any existing file documents;
- d. Interview employees or members of the public involved in the complaint;
- e. Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve Municipal Operations;
- f. Take other actions the BOS deems expedient to resolving the matter.

3.3 Upon receipt of a complaint, where the BOS deems appropriate, the BOS may delegate authority to investigate and respond to a complaint to another employee.

3.4 The BOS may not delegate the authority to investigate a complaint to an employee who is or may be named in the complaint.

3.5 If the complaint is made against the Town Administrator, the complaint shall be submitted to the Board of Selectmen directly for investigation.

4) Decision

4.1 Within 30 calendar days of receipt of a complaint by the Town Administrator, response shall be provided in writing to the complainant. If the Administrator is unable to provide a response within 30 days, the Administrator will notify the complainant of the delay with an estimate of when response will be provided.

5) General

5.1 Copies of all correspondence and notices shall be retained in the complaint file

5.2 Where appropriate, copies of correspondence shall be placed in the Employee's file that is subject of the complaint.

5.3 Communications with the complainant shall not provide details of the disciplinary measures imposed on any employee.

Exclusions-

This policy is not meant to address:

- a) Complaints about non-municipal services;
- b) Complaints regarding Shapleigh Rescue Squad service call*
- c) Issues already addressed by legislation;
- d) A decision of the Board of Selectmen or a decision of another board/committee
- e) Internal employee complaints;
- f) Hearsay.

*Please see “external complaint procedure” for Shapleigh Rescue Squad

SCHEDULE A
COMPLAINT FORM

Name of Complainant: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Name(s) of persons involved: _____

Date(s) Incident took place: _____

Location of the incident: _____

Main Concern: _____

Written description of the incident (attach additional pages as needed): _____

By signing this form, you are attesting that you were present for these incidents and that this statement is factual

Date: _____

Complainant Signature

Complaint received by _____ Date: _____