



**POLICY NUMBER: CORPORATE - 043**

**SUBJECT: CORPORATE CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS HANDLING  
POLICY**

**Purpose/Objective:**

This Policy is intended to enable the City of Brantford to promptly and effectively address program and service delivery complaints raised by members of the general public that were not satisfactorily handled via regular customer service channels or by frontline staff.

The Policy will assist the municipality in providing excellent service to the public and contribute to continuous improvement of operations. The municipality strives to enhance customer satisfaction by:

- Providing timely and accurate response to complaints, and
- Using complaints as an opportunity to improve program and service delivery issues

**Statement of Organizational Commitment:**

The City of Brantford is committed to a consistent and uniform process to respond to complaints received from members of the public regarding programs, facilities, City services, staff or operational procedures in a timely manner.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

The Corporation of the City of Brantford will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures promote customer service and reflect the guiding principles of customer service excellence.

**DEFINITIONS**

Definitions relating to this policy can be found in PART IV.

**PART I – APPLICATION OF POLICY:**

This policy **applies to** City of Brantford employees with the following exceptions:

- a) Outside boards and agencies, including: the Brantford Police Service, Brantford Public Library, and John Noble Home long-term care facility, which will apply their own complaints handling processes.
- b) The City's Elected Officials.

A complaint is distinct from:

- a request for service made on behalf of a citizen for a specific service, or to notify the municipality that a scheduled service was not provided on time.
- a general enquiry or specific request for information regarding municipal service
- an opinion or feedback, comment and expression of interest in a program or service
- an expression of approval or compliment for municipal staff member, program, product or process.
- a suggestion or idea submitted by a customer with the aim of improving services, programs, products or processes.

The Policy is not for complaints:

- regarding staff members that are employed by a service provider contracted by the municipality, (those employees shall be subject to the policies of that service provider);
- issues addressed by legislation, or an existing municipal by-law, policy or procedure;
- a decision of Council or a decision of a committee of Council; or,
- internal employee complaints; or,
- matters that are handled by a tribunal, court of law, quasi-judicial board, or other administrative or judicial body with authority to hear the complaint.

Complaints that are received that are considered to be frivolous or vexatious in nature upon review by the Director of the appropriate Department will not warrant a response. If the Director is uncertain, judgment will be sought from the General Manager and/or the Executive Leadership Team.

This policy applies to complaints that are received online at [www.brantford.ca](http://www.brantford.ca), or [www.mybrantford.ca](http://www.mybrantford.ca), by phone, at any service counter, by email, by mail or by fax.

## **PART II – POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

The City of Brantford will deal with all complaints promptly, courteously, impartially and professionally. All complainants will be treated with respect..

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with *the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and other applicable legislation. The identity of the complainant will be made known only to those who need to know in order to consider and respond to the complaint. All participants in the complaints process shall keep the details of the complaint confidential except as may be required by law. If the matter goes to the Ombudsman, it may be necessary to release the complainant's name and contact information during the resolution process.

### **What is a complaint?**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about the action or lack of action taken regarding operations, facilities or services provided by the City of Brantford or by a person or body acting on behalf of the City of Brantford, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

All formal complaints filed necessitate a response unless considered to be frivolous or vexatious in nature.

### **Who can make a complaint?**

Subject to the restrictions set out in Part I of this Policy, anyone who uses or is affected by City services can make a complaint. This includes but is not limited to:

- Residents
- People who work in or visit the city
- Local businesses
- Community groups

Some individuals may require assistance to make a complaint, and complaints may be made on their behalf, provided that the person affected has given their consent. A consent form for this purpose is attached as Schedule "A".

## **PART III – COMPLAINT PROCESS**

### **Frontline Resolution**

It is the responsibility of the complainant to attempt to resolve concerns by dealing with City employee(s) directly involved with the issue where appropriate.

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

### **Process for filing a Complaint**

Where a frontline resolution cannot be achieved, complaints should be submitted to the Customer Contact Centre Supervisor, on the form attached as Schedule "A". All information must be completed.

### **Complaints can be submitted using Schedule A – City of Brantford Corporate Complaint Form:**

- Online via the City's website [www.brantford.ca](http://www.brantford.ca) or [www.mybrantford.ca](http://www.mybrantford.ca)
- By telephone;
- By email;
- By mail;
- By fax
- In person at any City of Brantford facility

### **Service Standards**

The following Service Standards will be adhered to in the handling of all complaints received:

### **Receipt and Acknowledgement**

The Customer Contact Centre Supervisor, or designate, shall log the complaint into the Customer Complaint tool and forward a copy to the Director of the Department the complaint is regarding, or designate. Within three (3) business days of receipt of the complaint, the Director or designate shall acknowledge to the complainant, if contact information is provided, in writing that the complaint has been received using the form letter attached as Schedule "B" Acknowledgement of Complaint Form. This letter of acknowledgement must identify who will be following up on the complaint, as well as his/her contact information. Email communication can be utilized where an email address has been provided, using Schedule B template as the content of the email.

### **Investigation**

A Director, or designate, may not delegate the authority to investigate a complaint to an employee who is or may be named in the complaint.

If a complaint is made against a Director, or General Manager, the Chief Administrative Officer or designate shall conduct the investigation.

If a complaint is made against the Chief Administrative Officer, the Mayor shall consult with Council and may designate the City Solicitor, or other qualified individual at arms-length from the municipality, to investigate.

The designated investigator shall review the issues identified by the complainant and in doing so may:

- Review relevant municipal and provincial legislation;
- Review the municipality's relevant policies and procedures;
- Review any existing file documents;
- Interview employees or member(s) of the public involved in the issue;
- Identify actions that may be taken to address the complaint or improve municipal operations

### **Notify**

Any complaints that should be forwarded to another department should be emailed, with a copy to the Customer Contact Centre Supervisor.

### **Decision**

Within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of a complaint, the Director, or designate, shall provide a response in writing, if contact information is provided, to the complainant.

The response shall include:

- Whether the complaint was substantiated,
- If the complaint is not substantiated, provide reason(s) for their decision; and,
- Any actions the municipality has or will take as a result of the complaint.

If the Designated staff member is unable to provide a response within thirty (30) calendar days, they shall notify the complainant of the delay and provide an estimate of when a response will be provided.

### **Record**

The Director or designate shall retain a file on all communication with the complainant including the resolution in accordance with the municipality's records retention by-law. If a municipal employee was the subject of the complaint, a copy of the record may be retained in their personnel file, notwithstanding any procedures outlined in existing collective agreements.

### **Reporting**

Directors are responsible for advising the Supervisor of the Customer Contact Centre when the complaint has been resolved. The Customer Contact Centre Supervisor shall provide a Summary Report to the Executive Leadership Team outlining the complaints received and outcome on an annual basis.

### **Compliance**

General Managers and Directors are responsible for implementation and ongoing compliance with the Corporate Complaints Handling Policy.

Quarterly reports will be provided to General Managers and Directors indicating the number of complaints received during a specified timeframe, the number of complaints to date, and the number of complaints currently outstanding.

### **Responsibilities**

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

*Supervisors:* Supervisors are responsible for facilitating a prompt response to all complaints by their staff to ensure that service standards are achieved.

*General Managers (GMs) and Directors:* General Managers and Directors are responsible for the receipt and resolution of all complaints according to the service standards set out herein. GMs and Directors hold responsibility for departmental compliance to the Complaints Policy.

### **Monitoring/Contraventions**

The Customer Contact Centre Supervisor or designate will monitor corporate compliance with this Policy and will follow up with appropriate General Managers for further action as required.

### **Appeal Process**

Once the municipality has communicated the decision to the complainant, there is no appeal process at the municipal level.

## **PART IV – DEFINITIONS**

### **Definitions**

**Complaint** – any expression of dissatisfaction about the action or lack of action taken regarding operations, facilities or services provided by the City of Brantford or by a person or body acting on behalf of the City of Brantford. The term “dissatisfaction” is key to the definition of a complaint. Feedback of a positive or general nature, comments on a service or facility that do not require a response, or requests for service, are not complaints. Complaints imply that the complainant is unhappy with the service received and that they require a follow-up response in regards to the issue.

**Complainant** – the person who is dissatisfied and filing the complaint. Anyone who uses or is affected by City services may make a complaint including: residents, people who work in or visit the city, local businesses or community groups.

**Compliment** – an expression of appreciation for satisfactory or above-satisfactory service.

**Feedback** – Input from client that is neither positive, nor negative, but provides input or ideas.

**Service Request** – a request for a specific service provided by the City of Brantford. See the

list online at [www.Brantford.ca](http://www.Brantford.ca).

## **RELATED POLICY PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES**

Date of Enactment:

December 13, 2017

Related By-law Number/Staff Report Number:

Review and Amendment Dates:

Department Responsible for Review:

Corporate Services

Date of Next Review:

2022

Applicable Legislation/Legislative Authority:

[Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act](#)

[Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(MFIPPA\)](#)

## SCHEDULE A – Corporate Customer Complaint Form



\*Indicates a required field

### PURPOSE

To submit a complaint regarding a City of Brantford program, service, facility or staff member, where you believe the City has not provided a service experience to your satisfaction at the point of service delivery

All complaints will be dealt within in a confidential manner according to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

\*Are you submitting the complaint on behalf of someone else? ☐ Yes ☐ No

\*Please tell us which service/department you dealt with:

Please tell us which location you dealt with

Please tell us the date of your visit or interaction with the City of Brantford

Please tell us the approximate time of your visit or interaction with the City of Brantford

☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening

Name(s) of staff persons involved, if known:

\*In 350 words or less, please provide us with the details of your complaint:

\*In 350 words or less, please describe how you would like to see your complaint resolved:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

\*Have you contacted anyone else from the City regarding this complaint? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name(s) of Staff Member

Name of Department

**Contact Details of Complainant:**

\*Name:

\*Address:

\*City:

\*Province/State:

Country:

\*Postal/Zip Code:

\*Daytime Phone:  ( )

Extension:

Alternate Phone Number:  ( )

Extension:

Email Address:

\*Please indicate how you would like the City of Brantford to contact you regarding your complaint:

☐ Email ☐ Phone ☐ Mail

**Collection of data disclaimer:**

Personal information contained on this form is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, S. O. 2001, c. 25 and will be used for the purpose of administering your request for, and use of, Corporate Complaint Form. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Clerk, City of Brantford, 100 Wellington Square, PO Box 818, Brantford Ontario, N3T 5R7. Phone: 519-759-4150 ext. 5713.



## SCHEDULE B – Acknowledgement of Complaint Form Letter



**INSERT DATE**

**NAME**

**ADDRESS**

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns regarding [XXXXXX](#). Your written complaint was received by the municipality on [INSERT DATE COMPLAINT RECEIVED](#).

[Insert Name of person assigned complaint](#), has been assigned the investigation into your complaint and can be reached at 519-759-4150 or by email at [insert email address](#). We will provide a response to you within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving your complaint.

If you have any questions regarding the process, please contact me directly by phone at 519-759-4150 ext. [XXXX](#) or by email at [xxxxx@brantford.ca](mailto:xxxxx@brantford.ca)

Yours truly,

**Name**

**xx:**