

SERVICE REQUEST and COMPLAINTS POLICY (Policy 2023/14)

Section: S	Policy Number: 2023/14
Department: All Departments	Effective Date: January 17, 2023
Subject: SERVICE REQUEST and COMPLAINTS POLICY	Revision Date:

OBJECTIVE:

The Municipality of West Nipissing is committed to providing fair, respectful, and timely resolutions to requests and complaints from members of the public. The objective is to uphold a high level of service and to support continuous organizational improvement.

SCOPE:

This policy outlines how the Municipality addresses and resolves Service Requests, Formal Complaints, and Notice of Claims made by members of the public in relation to municipal services, infrastructure, or personnel.

DEFINITIONS:

“**Complainant**” or “**Client**” means a member of the public submitting a complaint or request regarding the Municipality of West Nipissing.

“**Complaint**” means an expression of dissatisfaction related to the service, actions or lack of actions by a municipal staff member in connection with the delivery of services to the public. Complaints may relate to the actions of an individual or a policy, process or procedure. A complaint is distinct from a Service Request, Notice of Claim, enquiry, feedback, or suggestion.

“**Employee**” means any paid employee, including, but not limited to, full-time, part-time, paid apprenticeships, and seasonal employees.

“**Enquiry**” means a general or specific request for information regarding a municipal service made by a member of the public that is resolved at the point of service delivery.

“**Municipality**” means the Corporation of the Municipality of West Nipissing.

“**Notice of Claim**” means a notification that a claim is being made against the Municipality. It is filed by a person who believes the Municipality has been negligent in its maintenance of municipal facilities, roads, sewers, and has caused them injury or property damage.

“**Service Request**” means a request made by a member of the public for a specific service, or to notify the Municipality that a scheduled service was not provided on time.

“**Support Team**” means Municipal employees who tend to calls, emails, online submissions, or in-person visits from the public to the Municipality.

“**Unreasonable Request**” means a request that is deemed to consume a disproportionate amount of staff time and resources, and/or to be discriminating, harassing or violent in nature. The Municipality complies with its *Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy* as well as the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, Human Rights Code* to protect workplace harassment from all sources.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

- 1.1 The Municipality will receive Requests, Complaints, and Notices in an accessible and transparent way.
- 1.2 Any member of the public can submit a Service Request, Complaint or Notice, using the established procedure, and it will be reviewed in accordance with this policy.
- 1.3 The Municipality will make every effort to resolve matters in a timely manner, using the established procedure.
- 1.4 The Municipality will ensure that this policy is accessible to the public.
- 1.5 The Municipality will ensure that all staff are aware of this policy and its procedures, provide staff training if required, and incorporate it as part of the new staff orientation process.
- 1.6 All formal complaints will be treated in a confidential manner to protect the complainant's privacy in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, subject to the need to disclose information as may be necessary in order to properly investigate the matter. The Municipality will also protect the privacy of any employee who is the subject of a complaint except when required to address the immediate complaint or address any labour relation issue(s) that may arise out of the said complaint.
- 1.7 Complaints received anonymously, or on behalf of an unidentified third party, or with an incomplete Formal Complaint form, will not be addressed. The client will be notified where possible.

SERVICE REQUEST PROCEDURE:

- 2.1 Service Requests can help resolve matters related, but not limited to: animals; garbage and recycling; municipal property damage or maintenance; road maintenance; trees; drainage and ditches; water and sewer services; and by-law enforcement.

Members of the public can also make enquiries, provide feedback or offer suggestions using the Service Request procedure.

- 2.2 ***Procedure for submitting a Service Request***

Individuals can report an issue or submit a request using one of the following options:

- online form at westnipissing.ca/service-request;
- by email to support@westnipissing.ca;
- by phone during regular business hours at 705-753-2250;
- by phone after hours at 705-753-1170 (for municipal emergencies only); or
- in-person at the Municipal office.

- 2.3 ***Procedure for receiving a Service Request***

The client will receive an immediate written or verbal acknowledgment upon submitting a Service Request confirming that the request has been received. Following a submission, clients will only be contacted if more information is required by the Support Team.

In most cases, within two (2) business days of receiving the request, a member of the Support Team will document the issue using the Municipality's integrated data management system (CGIS). Entries recorded in the management system are assigned to the appropriate department in order of priority.

For issues requiring immediate attention, the appropriate Department Head will be contacted by a member of the Support Team as soon as possible.

2.4 **Disclaimer**

- a) Requests made by members of the public using social media platforms, made directly to members of Council, or made to staff members outside of work may not get documented or be addressed. Where possible, the client will be notified and encouraged to use the proper procedure.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE:

3.1 **Note: this Complaint procedure is not meant to address:**

- Service Requests, Notice of Claims, enquiries, feedback, suggestions;
- issues already addressed by legislation, or an existing Municipal By-law, Policy or Procedure; or
- a decision of Council or a decision of a standing Committee of Council.

3.2 **Procedure for submitting a Complaint**

Prior to submitting a complaint, individuals are encouraged to determine whether their issue is a complaint, request for service, enquiry, feedback, or suggestion.

A complaint may be given verbally (in person or telephone) or in writing. While verbal complaints are taken seriously, they are not considered formal complaints.

If the complainant is not satisfied with how their verbal complaint was resolved, then they may submit a Formal Complaint. Written complaints may be submitted using the prescribed Formal Complaint Form, attached hereto as Appendix 'A', or in another written format. Complaints should include the following information:

- the specific details of what happened;
- where did it occur (if applicable);
- date of occurrence including the time, day, month and year;
- who was involved;
- what outcome is being sought; and
- complainant's contact information.

Complaints must be filed within thirty (30) days after the alleged event. This time limitation may be extended, when conditions exist to justify an extension.

Written complaints are to be submitted to the Chief Administrator Officer (CAO), using the prescribed Formal Complaint Form, attached hereto as Appendix 'A', either:

- by email to jbarbeau@westnipissing.ca
- through the "Formal Complaint Form" on the municipal website;
- by mail at 225 Holditch Street, Suite 101, Sturgeon Falls, ON P2B 1T1;
- by fax at 705-753-3950; or
- in-person at the Municipal Office.

3.3 **Procedure for receiving a Complaint**

- a) The client will receive a verbal or written acknowledgment that the complaint has been received.

- b) In most cases, within three (3) business days of receiving the complaint, the CAO or designate, will communicate with the client. The CAO and/or related department may request to meet with the client to resolve the complaint. In most cases, a full response will be given to the client, in writing, within thirty (30) days. The response will include any actions the Municipality has or will take moving forward, or the reasons why the complaint is considered unreasonable, if applicable.
- c) If an agreement or understanding cannot be reached between the complainant and the CAO, the client may contact the Ontario Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will independently receive, review, and investigate complaints, and provide a report of its activities and investigations. This step may only be taken once all steps above have been exhausted.

3.4 **Disclaimers**

- a) Complaints received anonymously, or on behalf of an unidentified third party, or with an incomplete Formal Complaint Form, will not be addressed. The client will be notified where possible.
- b) All formal complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner according to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Information will be collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the Act.

NOTICE OF CLAIMS PROCEDURE:

4.1 A Notice of Claim is filed by a person who believes the Municipality has been negligent in its maintenance of municipal facilities, roads, sewers, and has caused them injury or property damage. Examples include, but are not limited to: slip and falls; vehicle damage; sewer backups; flood damage; and water pipe issues.

4.2 **Procedure for submitting a Notice of Claim**

Prior to submitting a claim, members of the public are advised to consult with their insurance company or insurance representative for advice on how to deal with the injury or damage. A claimant's coverage may be more extensive than what they can recover from the Municipality.

Notice of Claims may be submitted to the Clerks Department using the prescribed form attached hereto as Appendix 'B':

- by email to support@westnipissing.ca;
- by mail at 225 Holditch Street, Suite 101, Sturgeon Falls, ON P2B 1T1;
- by fax at 705-753-3950; or
- in-person at the Municipal Office.

As per Section 44 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, complaints must be filed within 10 days after the alleged event (with some exceptions).

4.3 **Procedure for receiving a Notice of Claim**

In most cases, within ten (10) business days of receiving the complaint, a member of the Clerks Department will provide written acknowledgment to the client.

Upon receipt, the Clerks Department will inform the affected department for further investigation. Where insurance or legal entities are involved, the Municipality's insurance broker will also be notified.

A member of the Clerks Department will communicate with the client in writing once a conclusion has been reached.

APPENDIX "A" to Service Request and Complaints Policy # 2023/14



FORMAL COMPLAINT FORM

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION	
Full Name	Report completed by <i>(if different from complainant)</i>
Phone Number	Email Address
EVENT INFORMATION	
The specific details of your complaint	
Where it occurred (if applicable)	
Date and time of occurrence	
Who was involved	
What outcome is being sought	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	
Disclaimers a) Complaints received anonymously, or on behalf of an unidentified third party, or with an incomplete Formal Complaint Form, will not be addressed. The client will be notified where possible. b) All formal complaints will be dealt with in a confidential manner according to the <i>Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i> . Information will be collected, used, and disclosed in accordance with the Act.	
Date	Signature
Submit your completed form to Chief Administrative Officer By e-mail: jbarbeau@westnipissing.ca By mail or in-person: Municipality of West Nipissing, 101 - 225 Holditch St., Sturgeon Falls, ON P2B 1T1 By Fax: 705-753-3950 For more information, please call: 705-753-2250	

APPENDICE "A" to Service Request and Complaints Policy # 2023/14



FORMULAIRE DE PLAINTE OFFICIELLE

COORDONNÉES DU PLAIGNANT	
Prénom et Nom	Rapport complété par <i>(si différent du plaignant)</i>
Numéro de téléphone	Adresse courriel
INFORMATIONS SUR L'ÉVÉNEMENT	
Les détails spécifiques de votre plainte	
Lieux où l'événement s'est produit	
Date et heure de l'événement	
Qui était impliqué	
Quel est le résultat souhaité de cette plainte	
ACCORD	
Avis de non-responsabilité a) Les plaintes anonymes, ou au nom d'un tiers non identifié, ou avec un formulaire de plainte officielle incomplet, ne seront pas traitées. Le client sera avisé dans la mesure du possible. b) Toutes les plaintes officielles seront traitées de manière confidentielle conformément à la <i>Loi sur l'accès à l'information municipale et la protection de la vie privée</i> . Les renseignements seront recueillis, utilisés et divulgués conformément à la Loi.	
Date	Signature
Veillez faire parvenir votre formulaire complété au Directeur général Par courriel : jbarbeau@westnipissing.ca Par la poste ou en personne : Municipalité de Nipissing Ouest, 101 - 225, rue Holditch, Sturgeon Falls, ON P2B 1T1 Par télécopie : 705-753-3950 Pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez composer le 705-753-2250	

APPENDIX "B" to Service Requests and Complaints Policy No. 2023/14



NOTICE OF CLAIM

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:			
Name:			
Mailing Address:	Street, City, Province and Postal Code:		
Telephone:	Home:	Business or Cell:	Fax:
E-Mail:			
Date of Incident:		Time of Incident:	_____ AM _____ PM
Location of Incident/Accident:			
Details of Incident/Accident: <i>(i.e. Was the area under construction? What were the weather conditions? Additional information such as photos or other documentation can be attached separately.)</i>			
Police Department notified ?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	IF "yes", Incident Report #:	
<i>Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act and Insurance Act of Ontario and used to process insurance claims and will be safe guarded under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.</i>			
CLAIMANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:			
Date:	Signature:		
Submit your completed form to: <div style="text-align: right;"> Municipal Clerk Municipality of West Nipissing 101 – 225 Holditch Street, Sturgeon Falls, ON P2B 1T1 E-mail: mducharme@westnipissing.ca Tel.: 705-753-2250 • Fax: 705-753-3950 </div>			
VISIT ... www.westnipissingouest.ca			
DISCLAIMER: <i>The completion and submission of this form does not constitute liability on the part of the Municipality of West Nipissing. The Municipality accepts no liability or responsibility for the content provided in this form.</i>			

MUNICIPAL OFFICE USE ONLY:		CLAIM NO.:
Received by:	Date:	Impacted Department: