

THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF EAST ST. PAUL

POLICY MANUAL

<i>Reference</i> General Administration	<i>Classification</i> Policy
<i>Subject</i> Complaint Policy	<i>Pages:</i> 4
<i>Authority</i> Council	<i>Effective Date</i> July 16, 2025
<i>Approved</i> Resolution 2025-200	GEN-118

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, consistent, and fair process for the receipt, documentation, assessment, and resolution of complaints received from residents of the Rural Municipality of East St. Paul. This policy ensures that complaints are managed professionally and in a timely manner, and that appropriate follow-up is provided based on the nature and urgency of each issue.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all complaints submitted by residents regarding municipal services, infrastructure, by-law infractions, and matters under the jurisdiction of the RM of East St. Paul.

DEFINITIONS:

Complaint: A written expression of dissatisfaction related to a municipal program, service, or by-law, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.

Resident: An individual who resides within the boundaries of the RM of East St. Paul, or who owns property within the municipality.

Vexatious Complaint: Instituted without sufficient grounds and serving only to cause annoyance to the defendant.

POLICY:

1. Submission Requirements

To be accepted and processed, all complaints must meet the following criteria:

- The complainant must be a resident or property owner within the RM of East St. Paul.
- The complainant must provide their full name, municipal address, and telephone number (email is optional).
- The complaint must be submitted in writing, either:
 - By email,
 - Through the RM's official website (online form),
 - By letter/mail, or
 - In-person at the Municipal Office.

Anonymous complaints will not be investigated unless they present an immediate public safety concern and sufficient detail is provided to warrant follow-up.

2. Logging and Tracking

All complaints will be:

- Logged into the RM's internal complaint tracking system/database,
- Assigned a reference number (for tracking),
- Categorized by type and urgency, and
- Assigned to the appropriate department or staff member for investigation and follow-up.

3. Complaint Categories

Complaints will be prioritized according to the following categories:

- **Level 1 – Emergency / Public Safety (Critical Priority):**
Issues that pose an immediate threat to life, public health, or critical infrastructure and require urgent attention (e.g. downed power lines, blocked emergency access, active water main break).
- **Level 2 – High Priority (Urgent, but Non-Emergency):**
Concerns that may escalate if not addressed promptly and have a significant impact on public service or quality of life (e.g. dangerous road conditions, sewage backup, vandalism in public spaces).

- **Level 3 – Medium Priority (Nuisance or Bylaw-Related):**
Issues that affect the enjoyment, aesthetics, or general well-being of the community but do not pose an immediate risk (e.g. noise complaints, overgrown grass, property standards violations, illegal dumping).
- **Level 4 – Low Priority (Routine or Informational):**
General inquiries, routine maintenance requests, or non-urgent concerns (e.g. missed garbage collection, park maintenance, potholes, general questions or feedback).

4. Investigation and Response Timelines

Each complaint will be acknowledged and addressed based on its priority level. Target timelines are as follows:

- **Level 1 – Emergency / Public Safety:**
 - Acknowledgement: Within 1 business day, unless complaint falls on a weekend or statutory holiday.
 - Action: Immediate or as soon as safely possible
- **Level 2 – High Priority:**
 - Acknowledgement: Within 2 business days, unless complaint falls on a weekend or statutory holiday.
 - Action: Within 5–10 business days
- **Level 3 – Medium Priority:**
 - Acknowledgement: Within 3–5 business days
 - Action: Within 10–20 business days
- **Level 4 – Low Priority:**
 - Acknowledgement: Within 5 business days
 - Action: Within 20–30 business days, subject to scheduling and resource availability

Where a complaint requires a longer investigation or coordination with third parties, the RM will provide periodic updates to the complainant as appropriate.

5. Confidentiality

The RM will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of the complainant's personal information. However, in cases involving by-law enforcement or potential legal action, the identity of the complainant may be disclosed if required by law or necessary to support enforcement action.

6. Vexatious or Repetitive Complaints

The RM reserves the right to cease responding to individuals who submit repeated complaints that are:

- Already resolved,
- Lacking merit or reasonable grounds,
- Intended to harass or abuse municipal staff and/or property owners,
- Previously addressed through a formal investigation or legal process.

The CAO or their designate will determine whether a complaint qualifies as vexatious and may impose conditions or restrictions on future communications.