

BE FAIR: RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY TO COMPLAINTS

2019 UBCM CONVENTION

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ROLE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

Vision

- B.C.'s independent voice for fairness

Mandate

- Independent and impartial oversight
- Ensure fair treatment in public service
- Support public authorities

ROLE OF THE OMBUDSPERSON

OPEN MEETINGS:

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



Special Report No. 34 | SEPTEMBER 2012
to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

BYLAW ENFORCEMENT:

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



Special Report No. 36 | MARCH 2016
to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia

DIVERSITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPLAINT ISSUES



Bylaw Enforcement

Development/Zoning/OCP

Fees and Charges



ADMINISTRATIVE FAIRNESS IS...

The standard of conduct that people can expect from public authorities in a democratic society

Consistent and
transparent decision
making

Fair and respectful
treatment of all people

Properly authorized
policies and practices,
supportive of program
goals

Providing understandable
reasons for decisions

Even-handed and
reasonable application of
rules

People impacted by
decisions have an
opportunity to be heard

Following regulations,
policies and procedures

ADMINISTRATIVE FAIRNESS IS...

Following a fair
decision making
process

Making a fair
decision

Treating people
fairly



RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY TO COMPLAINTS



ESSENTIALS OF A COMPLAINT SYSTEM

Fair


Accessible

Responsive



FAIR

Procedural Fairness

- **An unbiased decision maker**
 - **The right to be heard**
- 

ACCESSIBLE

Simple to use

Explained in plain language

Widely available

Variety of contact options

RESPONSIVE

Complaints treated seriously, but positively

Reasonable timeframes

Flexibility in the process

CASE SUMMARY



UNREASONABLE CONDUCT

Behaviour



Health
Safety
Resource
Equity Issues

PREVENTING UNREASONABLE CONDUCT



1. Set ground rules

2. Manage expectations

RESPONDING TO UNREASONABLE CONDUCT

DESC

DESCRIBE



```
graph TD; A[DESCRIBE] --> B[EXPRESS]; B --> C[SPECIFY]; C --> D[CONSEQUENCES<br/>positive (+) and negative (-)];
```

EXPRESS

SPECIFY

CONSEQUENCES

positive (+) and negative (-)

DESC EXAMPLE

DESCRIBE: I notice that I received 20 emails from you this week that did not contain any new information.

EXPRESS: I have difficulty finding time to work on resolving your concerns when you email me large volumes of information that is not new or relevant to the issues you raised. Each time this happens, I have to take time to print it, read it and file it.

SPECIFY: I would appreciate if you could limit your emails and only send me any new and directly relevant information.

CONSEQUENCES:

(+) If you can limit your emails and only send me any new and directly relevant information, I will be able to resolve your matter much sooner. (-) If I continue to receive large volumes of emails that are not directly related to your complaint, it may take longer for me to respond to you.

OPEN DISCUSSION

- **What are the most common kinds of complaints you receive?**
- **What are some of the challenges you face in responding to these complaints?**
- **What are some of the essential skills required for staff to resolve complaints?**
- **How can local government leaders support staff in responding to complaints?**

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

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