

Public Complaints Policy

RM of Buckland No. 491

Date of Council Approval: April 13, 2026

Resolution Number: 2026-0105

1. Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and consistent process for receiving, documenting, responding to, reporting and tracking complaints from ratepayers or residents within the RM of Buckland No. 491.

This policy ensures complaints are handled in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner while respecting the rights and privacy of all parties involved.

2. Scope

This policy applies to complaints regarding:

- Alleged violations of RM bylaws.
- Concerns related to municipal services or operations.
- Matters that may require investigation by municipal staff, a Bylaw Enforcement Officer, or a Community Safety Officer.

This policy does not apply to matters under the jurisdiction of other agencies or levels of government, including but not limited to the RCMP, provincial ministries, or federal authorities.

3. Complaint Submission Requirements

All complaints must:

1. Be submitted in writing using the RM complaint form or through written correspondence.
2. Be signed by the complainant.
3. Include the complainant's full name and contact information.
4. Provide sufficient details regarding the nature of the complaint, including location, date, and description of the issue where applicable.

Anonymous complaints will generally not be investigated unless the matter involves a significant risk to public safety or municipal infrastructure.

4. Neighbour Dispute Resolution

Where a complaint involves a dispute between neighbouring property owners or residents, the RM encourages individuals to make reasonable efforts to resolve the matter directly with the other party prior to submitting a formal complaint.

The RM recognizes that many neighbour disputes can be resolved through communication and cooperation without the need for municipal enforcement.

Where appropriate, RM administration may request confirmation that the complainant has attempted to resolve the issue directly before initiating an investigation. This requirement does not apply where there are safety concerns or where immediate enforcement action may be necessary.

5. Acknowledgement and Investigation

1. **Upon receipt of a written complaint** RM administration will review the complaint to determine whether it falls within municipal jurisdiction, and advise complainant of the decision to proceed or not
2. Where appropriate, the complaint will be referred to the designated Bylaw Enforcement Officer, Community Safety Officer, or relevant municipal staff for investigation.
3. Staff may request additional information from the complainant if required to proceed with the investigation.
4. Investigations will be conducted in accordance with applicable RM bylaws, policies, and provincial legislation, including but not limited to *The Municipalities Act M-36.1* or *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*

6. Confidentiality and Privacy

The RM of Buckland recognizes the importance of protecting personal information and will make reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of complainants where possible.

Personal information collected as part of the complaint process will be managed in accordance with *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (LA FOIP)*.

Information will only be used or disclosed for the purposes of investigating, administering, and enforcing municipal bylaws or policies, or as otherwise authorized or required by law.

7. Limitations on Confidentiality

While the RM will make reasonable efforts to protect the identity of complainants, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Complainants should be aware that:

- Evidence submitted in support of a complaint may be required to be disclosed during an investigation, enforcement proceeding, or legal action.
- Information provided may be shared with the subject of the complaint or other relevant parties only where necessary to ensure procedural fairness.
- The complainant may be required to provide additional information or testimony and may be called as a witness if enforcement action or prosecution occurs.

As a result, the identity of the complainant may become known during the course of the investigation or legal proceedings.

8. Frivolous, Vexatious, or Malicious Complaints

The RM reserves the right to decline to investigate complaints that are determined to be:

- frivolous
- vexatious
- repetitive in nature without new information
- made in bad faith or with the intent to harass or harm another individual.

Where repeated frivolous complaints are received from the same individual, the RM may limit further correspondence or require additional documentation before proceeding with any future complaints.

9. Role of Council

To ensure complaints are documented and processed in accordance with this policy, council members who receive complaints from residents shall refer the complainant to RM administration. Where the complaint is regarding Administration, council members shall refer the complainant to the Reeve or Ethics Commissioner.

Council will not investigate individual complaints directly unless the matter is brought forward through appropriate channels.

10. Role of Administration

Administration will keep an annual List of Complaints received and their status. The List of Complaints Received shall be presented as part of the monthly CAO report. The List of

Complaints shall not have any complaint removed, such that at the end of the year, Council will have a full list.

10. Record Keeping

All written complaints and related investigation records shall be maintained by RM administration in accordance with the RM's records management practices and applicable legislation.

11. Insufficient Information

The RM may decline to investigate a complaint where insufficient information is provided to reasonably identify the issue or alleged bylaw violation.

Where necessary and possible, administration may request additional information from the complainant. If the requested information is not provided within a reasonable timeframe, the complaint may be closed.

12. Withdrawal of Complaints

Once a complaint has been submitted and an investigation has commenced, the RM reserves the right to continue the investigation regardless of whether the complainant later withdraws the complaint.

Where a potential bylaw violation or public safety concern exists, the RM may proceed with enforcement in order to protect the interests of the municipality and its residents.

13. Abuse of Process

In order to ensure no Abuse of Process occurs, administration may:

- require complaints to be submitted in writing using the prescribed complaint form
- require additional supporting information before initiating an investigation
- decline to investigate complaints that do not meet the requirements of this policy.