

Town of Sandown
PO Box 1756
Sandown, NH 03873
Office (603) 887-3646
www.sandown.us

Town of Sandown Complaint Policy

Responsibilities:

Through this process, the Town will:

- Treat a complaint promptly, politely and when appropriate, confidentially.
- Establish a simple form for residents to complete to lodge their complaints.
- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing.
- Establish a routine priority process which encompasses all types of resident complaints with guidelines and tracking.
- Respond within a stated period of time and take action as appropriate.
- Devise a tracking mechanism to ensure efficient and timely responses.
- Monitor residents' complaints for trends or patterns which may indicate a wider issue to be addressed.
- Tracking of all complaints by the Town Administrator and submission of a quarterly report to the Board of Selectmen.

The resident's responsibility is to:

- Complaints of criminal or police matters reported to Police immediately.
- Any other complaint brought to the town within 10 business days of the issue.
- Utilize the complaint form to notify the town of the issue.
- Explain the problem as clearly and fully as possible.
- Allow the Town a reasonable time to deal with the matter.
- Recognize that some circumstances are not under the Town's control and may be dealt with at a state level or may be a civil/private matter between parties.

1. Written Complaints:

- Anonymous and/or verbal complaints will not be accepted.
- Complaint form must be completed and sent to Selectmen's Office.
- Complaint form forwarded to appropriate Department Head and Selectmen Liaison.
- If the complaint is about a Department Head, the Town Administrator will conduct the investigation with the Selectman Liaison.
- If the complaint is about the Town Administrator, the Board of Selectmen will conduct the investigation.

- Notice of the complaint and investigation outcome will be placed in the employee's personnel file if the complaint was founded and resulted in disciplinary action.

Once the complaint is received by the Department Head:

- Form is reviewed to determine priority – time frames and processes are priority specific. Unless otherwise bound by statutory requirements, complaints will be handled as follows:
 - Emergency – Immediate action required
 - Health and Safety – Addressed within 5 working days
 - Other – Addressed within 10 working days
- Prior to action, complaints are researched by reviewing all available information and files to validate if the complaint is legitimate.
- Site visit will be performed if deemed appropriate by the Department Head.
- Follow up correspondence within above-noted time frame will be sent to complainant.
- Other steps may include a meeting with parties involved, follow up letters, additional site visits, referral to state agencies, formal cease and desist order or possible court action.
- Complainant may request status updates during enforcement.
- A copy of the complaint is available to the potential violator upon request, with the exception of those complaints deemed confidential.
- Complainant will be sent a final letter once complaint is resolved or the case may be turned over to legal counsel if necessary.
- The Department Head will notify the Town Administrator of the investigation outcome and provide an investigation summary and a copy of all documentation will be kept on file in the Selectmen's Office.
- If the complainant is unsatisfied with the outcome, the complainant may contact the Town Administrator to request an appeal hearing with the Board of Selectmen.
- To be eligible for an appeal hearing, an Appeal Hearing Request form must be completed and returned to the Selectmen's Office within ten (10) working days of receiving your notice of decision. Within fourteen (14) working days of receipt of this notice by the Selectmen's Office, a hearing will be scheduled with the Board of Selectmen to be held during an upcoming regularly scheduled meeting. You will be notified in writing of the date, place and time of the hearing.
- The Board of Selectmen will render the final decision on any complaint brought before them. The decision is final with no further recourse except as allowed by law.

2. Dismissal of a Complaint:

A complaint may be dismissed for the following reasons:

- The complainant withdraws the complaint.
- The complaint was not received within a reasonable time by the town.
- The complainant fails to respond to repeated requests for additional information needed to process the complaint.
- The complainant cannot be located after reasonable attempts.
- The complaint was deemed unfounded.

All complaints are taken seriously. All written complaints are treated with the same amount of standing. The Department Head reserves the right to waive any enforcement action if, after research, it is shown there is a history of unfounded complaints on the same issue. The Board of Selectmen will be notified of all complaints and resolutions.

3. Adoption and Revisions:

Adopted by the Sandown Board of Selectmen on July 12, 2021.

Revisions:

Sandown Board of Selectmen

Eric L. Olsen, Chairman

Jonathan M. Goldman, Vice Chairman

Thomas Tombarello

Darren Hudgins

Robert Nickerson