



WORKPLACE CONFLICT RESOLUTION GUIDELINES AND PROCESSES

The County is committed to sustaining a positive work environment in which employees work constructively together and are not in violation of County policies. This procedure pertains to every employee of the County, whether working at a County worksite, offsite, or working remotely.

We are committed to developing and sustaining a positive work environment in which:

- Leadership, managers, and supervisors work towards improved communication and understanding between each other and the staff they supervise and are accountable for promoting a positive work environment and resolving conflicts or complaints where these arise.
- Employees work constructively together with their supervisors, managers, and leadership and are not in violation of any federal or provincial legislation, or of the County's Bylaws, policies, or administrative procedures or processes.
- Inquiries or investigations into conflicts, complaints, or reported workplace misconduct under County policy are conducted in a timely manner and fairly, and where conflicts or complaints are resolved in a timely manner and fairly.
- The rights of those reporting or providing witness on conduct that violates the expectations of the County are protected, including protecting the person(s) making a good faith disclosure or complaint from interference, coercion, discrimination or penalty, retaliation, or punishment; and
- Where those looking to make a complaint, participating in an investigation, or participating in a conflict resolution understand that malicious, frivolous, or vexatious complaints or behaviour will be addressed in accordance with applicable legislation, policy, or legal action as appropriate.

The County supports the need to ensure confidentiality in the conflict resolution process and will work to ensure that those with legitimate complaints will not be discouraged from registering them with the County. However, employees must be aware that personal agendas are not to be carried out.

The County shall not act on complaints unless the complainant is prepared to put their claim in writing. The substance of the complaint will be treated with utmost confidence and not discussed with others except to the minimum extent necessary to conduct a complete and fair investigation. In all cases, the person who is alleged to have committed the infraction will be made aware of the complaint at some point during the investigation.

The County will maintain an environment of safe disclosure when a report is made, in which:

- The person who receives and/or investigates the report shall protect the identity of the person making the report to the extent possible under legislation and the County policies in effect at the time of the alleged misconduct.
- The County will not tolerate any retaliation or punishment, directly or indirectly, against any individual who, in good faith, makes a report.
- All individuals against whom allegations are made will maintain the rights, privileges, and protections afforded them through the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, *Alberta Human Rights Act*, and other applicable legislation, and the County policies in effect at the time of the alleged misconduct.



If you have a concern related to harassment, bullying, violence, or discrimination in the workplace, please refer to the [Harassment, Bullying, Violence, and Discrimination in the Workplace Policy](#) for information on proceeding with a complaint or investigation.

Informal Discussion

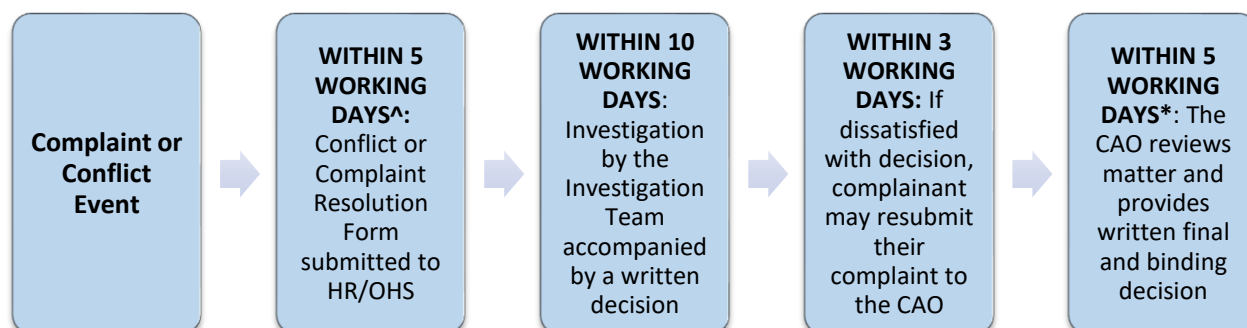
Conflict or complaint resolution is a shared responsibility of employees, managers and supervisors, and the leadership of the County. All employees at all levels across the County are responsible for working together in a respectful manner that upholds the County's policies.

Many workplace problems can be resolved through conversations. These conversations may be between employees themselves, or between employees, supervisors or managers.

We encourage all of our employees to resolve workplace problems as and when they arise, and to seek assistance from their supervisors or managers when needed.

Investigation and Formal Resolution

We encourage an informal discussion between those directly involved in a workplace conflict or complaint. However, if those involved feel that these discussions are unsuccessful in resolving a difference concerning the interpretation, application, operation or any alleged violation of the County's employment or human resources policies, employees may engage the conflict resolution process as set out below.



^ The Investigation Team will give a written decision within five (5) working days of receiving the complaint unless an appropriate investigation cannot be carried out in this time frame, in which case the Investigation Team will give written notice to the employee submitting the complaint of an alternate date by which a decision will be given. This extended time frame will not exceed thirty (30) working days from submission date of the complaint.

* The CAO will review the matter and give a written decision within five (5) days, unless an appropriate investigation cannot be carried out in this time frame, in which case the CAO will give written notice to the employee submitting the complaint that a decision will be given on an alternative date. The alternative date will be provided in writing to the employee, with the extended time frame not to exceed thirty (30) working days from the submission of the complaint to the CAO.

In calculating timelines Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays are not counted; for employees who regularly work Saturdays and/or Sundays, their regular days off will not be counted.

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Abandoning a Complaint

An employee may abandon a complaint at any time by providing written notification to the Investigation Team regardless of what stage the complaint is at. A complaint will be deemed to have been abandoned if the complaint:

- Is not filed within the time period provided for the filing;
- Fails to state the facts on which the complaint is based;
- Fails to state what action is being complained of; or
- Fails to state the remedy or relief being sought.

If the complaint involves a person to whom the complaint should be submitted, the complaint will proceed immediately to the next higher level. In the case of the CAO, the complaint will be submitted to an independent third party external to the County for investigation and/or resolution.

Copies of the complaint and decisions will be placed on the employee's Employment Record file.

Requirement to Act in Good Faith

While no employee will suffer interference, coercion, discrimination or penalty, retaliation, or punishment in the course of their employment with the County when they initiate or participate in an investigation or complaint or conflict resolution in good faith, the leadership of the County takes seriously the workplace disruptions that are caused when an employee operates in a manner that is malicious, frivolous, or vexatious (bad faith). If it is determined, at the discretion of management, that an employee made or participated in a complaint, investigation, or conflict resolution in bad faith, this will be dealt with in a disciplinary manner in accordance with the Performance Improvement and Progressive Discipline Policy.

Where those looking to make a complaint understand that malicious, frivolous, or vexatious complaints will be addressed in accordance with applicable legislation, policy, or legal action as appropriate

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Conflict or Complaint Resolution Reporting Form

Please attach additional pages if necessary.

Employee Name: _____ Date: _____

Details of Complaint or Conflict Event(s) or Occurrence(s):

Date(s):

Witnesses:

Actions/Attempted Resolutions:

Remedy/Relief Sought:

Signature: _____