

1. Let the person talk. Once complainant tells you what is on their mind they usually calm down.
2. In your friendliest manner, tell the complainant that you understand that they have not received the service needed; rather than trying to excuse or justify the action of the City.
3. Offer to do what you can to solve the caller's problem. If they want to see someone higher up, offer to arrange it. This is no reflection on your own ability and may go far in calming the situation.
4. Assure the person of the goodwill of the City, ask if there are any other problems, and thank them for calling.

Except for complaints involving police reporting or fire and rescue calls, all complaints forwarded to a Department Head that require action or research and that have not been resolved by the initial receiving staff person, are to be recorded on the standard citizen complaint form.

If the nature of the complaint is within the jurisdiction of the department receiving the complaint, the department head will assign the complaint to a member of his department for completion of the Action portion of the complaint form. After the necessary action is taken, the department head will review the action to insure that it has been handled in a correct and prompt manner. When the department head is satisfied with the action taken, he shall advise the person making the complaint or inquiry and indicate the disposition taken. The original of the completed complaint form will then be forwarded to the City Manger for his review and the copy retained by the department head. The complaint for will remain on file for 30 days, unless the department head recommends a longer filing period, and will then be destroyed.

If the nature of the complaint is not within the jurisdiction of the department receiving it, the complaint or inquiry portion shall be completed and the form forwarded to the City Manager. The City Manager will assign the complaint or inquiry to the appropriate department for action. The department assigned the complaint or inquiry shall then follow the procedure as outlined above.

Steps in handling complaints:

1. Complaint received by non-Department Head.
2. If initial receiving staff person cannot satisfy complainant, the complainant is invited to talk with respective Department Head.
3. Department Head receives the complaint and records pertinent information.
4. Department Head assigns responsibility for investigation and correction to appropriate department or official.
5. Follow up on all complaints, stating the problem and what action is needed. This is in written form for later reference.
6. Department Head or person assigned by Department Head notifies the complainant of action taken.
7. Department Head returns the original to the City Manager's office and retains a copy.

Some complaints may have to be handled by more than one department. If your department has done work on a complaint and it must be transferred to another department for additional attention, pass on all information you have on the complaint, including what action you have taken.

Handling complaints is one of the most difficult jobs any City employee will have. Few complaints are exactly alike and no citizens are exactly alike. It is your responsibility to resolved the problem with prompt and efficient courtesy within established practices of the City. It is not always possible to give the “one” answer the complainant wants to hear, but do your best to explain the situation and that the desire of the City is to provide the best service possible under the conditions that exist.

Allan H. Green
City Manager