



Policy for Resolving Complaints

INTRODUCTION

The Association and all involved parties are required to maintain the strictest confidentiality regarding complaints and subsequent investigations. Complaints usually fall into three categories – those dealing with code of conduct issues of members that may be generated by other members or the public at large; those relating to the quality and timeliness of programs, services and facilities offered by the Association to its members, and those relating to contracted services. This policy incorporates and details the procedures approved by the Association in March 2018.

OVERVIEW

The Courtenay and District Fish and Game Protective Association, as a volunteer run organization does not have bylaws officers charged with enforcement of its rules, regulations and codes of conduct.

It is the duty of all members, their guests and employees to ensure compliance with Association rules, regulations and codes of conduct.

The Association expects its Board of Directors to deal with complaints in a fair and timely manner and to dispense appropriate discipline in accordance with its statutory duty to maintain internal controls and provide members with opportunities to carry out their activities in a safe and harmonious environment.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide organized, fair and accessible processes for dealing with complaints from members.

SCOPE

This policy provides:

1. The process for dealing with all complaints of conduct by members contrary to its bylaws, rules, regulations and codes of conduct that are deemed to be:
 - a. unsafe or otherwise disruptive to other members' enjoyment of their activities, or
 - b. harmful to the Association's property, reputation and/or business interests.Actions appropriate to the alleged offenses are described.
2. The process for dealing with complaints regarding the programs, services and facilities provided to members.
3. Complaints arising from failure to meet contractual expectations are beyond the scope of this policy because they must be dealt with as detailed in the subject contract.

RESPONSIBILITY

This policy recognizes the Board's obligation to manage the Association's affairs in an orderly, fair and harmonious manner, making it a "happy and relaxed" place for outdoor recreation activities. However, the potential for this to become a disruptive and ineffective use of the Board's volunteer resources requires that much of the work be delegated to one or more of its directors who will be assigned by the President in rotation.



The President will report regularly to the Board on numbers of complaints received, numbers of complaints resolved and numbers pending. The assigned director(s) has the authority to:

1. investigate complaints, and if necessary, call upon the services of the Ethics Committee,
2. dismiss a complaint as unfounded,
3. mediate a settlement between the parties,
4. provide letters of discipline (for the President's signature), and
5. recommend to the Board other sanctions up to and including suspension or revoking of membership.

Unless #5 above is deemed necessary by the assigned director(s) there will be no other discussion of complaints or discipline at Board Meetings.

PROCEDURES

Complaints regarding programs, services and facilities must be dealt with through the Association's organizational chain of command. Typically, first by the Standing Committee Chair of area concerned, then secondly, failing a satisfactory resolution, the Director appointed by the President to liaise with that Standing Committee.

The first approach should be verbal and focused on finding a solution. If unsuccessful, a written complaint directed to the Chair should be registered at the Association office. If unable to resolve the complaint the Chair's responsibility is to forward it to their liaison Director, and so advise the complainant. Working with the Chair, the Director may, at their discretion, terminate consideration of the complaint and advise the complainant of that decision and the reasoning leading to it. Alternatively, the Director may, if the complaint is deemed sufficiently important (e.g. safety, security and financial issues), bring it to the Board for resolution.

Any member generating or receiving a written complaint must register it at the Association's Office in order that it may be dealt with according to this policy. Official complaints will be numbered, date stamped and added to the complaints file. They will be managed in accordance with the Association's records management process and the PIPA.

Complaints about conduct may be generated by any Association member or member of the public. They must be in writing and if originating from an Association member be on the official complaints form. The Office Administrator will advise the President of the receipt and filing of all complaints about conduct. The President will assign a director(s) to take the lead and in 14 days notify both parties of receipt of the complaint and the options and plan for its resolution.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS:

1: Friendly advice – any member, employee or contractor, may advise a member of a breach or potential breach of the rules or code of conduct. Examples; "Did you know that this is a no smoking area?", "Dogs are not permitted on the beach", "Alcohol may not be consumed outside the licensed area"; "Please obey the site speed limits" etc.

2: Verbal warning – any staff member or contractor with delegated authority, officer, director or senior manager (standing committee chair) should issue a verbal warning when they observe conduct contrary to the Association's code of conduct, rules and regulations, as posted. Such a verbal warning should describe the offending behaviours, cite the prohibitions and, if possible, show the written code, rule or regulation, and be followed by a statement of consequences of not complying.



3: Written warning – the assigned director must draft for the President’s signature warning letters, which must;

- a) describe the offending behaviours,
- b) cite the specific references to rules or regulations,
- c) recommend a resolution with a timeline, and
- d) be followed by a statement of consequences for not complying.

All warning letters must advise the recipient of their option of appealing the decision to the Board for reference to the Ethics Committee process. The assigned director should ensure delivery of the letter, on behalf of the President. The letter could be emailed as a confidential attachment or sent by registered mail. The assigned director should also notify the complainant that action has been taken to resolve the complaint (but not the specific nature of it) and that there is an expectation of a timely resolution. Warning letters will be noted in the member data base, though the exact nature of the offense and its resolution will not be. More than two warning letters may lead to discipline.

4: Suspensions and expulsion - Members committing serious breaches such as safety and fire protection infringements, physical altercations, bullying or harassing behaviour, will be dealt with by the Board. There are generally only three penalties – a) suspension for remaining period of the year, b) suspension for additional years and c) lifetime expulsion. The Board may approve a), but b) and c) decisions are subject to special resolutions of the membership.

Members witnessing activities of a criminal nature should immediately refer to the proper authorities – police, or conservation or fisheries officers.

Members convicted of a criminal offense may be suspended or expelled.

DEFINITIONS

PIPA is the BC Personal Information Protection Act.

REFERENCES

Bylaw Articles 1,B.2 and 5,6.5 apply to expulsion. Article 70 of the BC Societies Act also applies.