

By-law Services

Respecting the rights of our neighbours and ensuring the health and safety of the public is an important and essential aspect of community living. At times; however, boundaries may be crossed and Bylaw Compliance Officers are given the task to investigate complaints received from the public about alleged violations of various municipal bylaws.

The goal of the By-law department is not to penalize the residents of East Zorra-Tavistock or visitors but, rather, to achieve compliance through education and the provision of information in order to preserve the quality of life to which each citizen is entitled.

Bylaw Compliance deals with the following issues:

- **Clean Yard Violations**
 - Unsightly premises, discarded vehicles
- **Fire/Building Code Violations**
 - Life safety issues, public hazards
- **Property Standards**
 - Illegal structures, health & safety issues
- **Animal Control**
 - Dogs running loose, barking
- **Traffic regulation**
 - Illegal parking, vehicle obstructions
- **Zoning regulations**
 - land uses
- **Garage Sales/Weed Control**
- **Noise/Nuisance Complaints**

As of October 2008 the Township has instituted set fines for many of the by-law infractions. However, failure to comply with some of the more serious violations could result in an order to appear in court.

By-Law Complaint Guidelines

Fire Code Violations (verbal)

1. Complaints can be directed to the Township Fire Chief and/or Protective Services Co-ordinator.
2. All complaints must be investigated immediately by the Township Fire Chief or designate.
3. All orders must be made by the Township Fire Chief.

Building Code Violations (verbal)

1. Complaints can be directed to the Township Chief Building Official and /or Protective Services Co-ordinator.
2. All complaints must be investigated immediately by the Township Chief Building Official or designate.
3. All orders must be made by the Township Chief Building Official.

Property Standards/Clean Yard Violations (written)

1. All complaints are to be directed to the Protective Services Co-ordinator.
2. Complaints must be in the form of a written letter or email; however, certain situations will qualify for an investigation without a letter if there appears to be a bona fide health and safety concern.
3. An investigation report will be started and information recorded to determine if a case file should be started.
4. Investigations will be done at the request of the Protective Services Co-ordinator by the Chief Building Officer, or the Township Fire Chief, or other agencies, if necessary.

5. Information observed at the site will be documented by investigator(s) for review by the Protective Services Co-ordinator who will then consult the applicable by-law and confirm if a violation has occurred.
6. A letter will then be issued by the Protective Services Co-ordinator to complainant acknowledging receipt of complaint and advising of what will be happening.
7. The necessary paperwork will then begin to bring the property in question into compliance. The Protective Services Co-ordinator advises the offending party of the violation and compliance requirements. A reasonable time frame will be then be set for a compliance check on property. The Protective Service Co-ordinator then notates compliance date and books follow up investigation.
8. If compliance is met upon that date then a letter will be issued to offending party to advise.
9. If compliance is not fully met then the Protective Services Co-ordinator will contact the party to advise of enforcement procedure (depending on situation there could be charges being laid, a court summons issued, or the Township taking action to remove.)

Noise and Nuisance By-Law Complaints (verbal)

1. All complaints are to be directed to the Protective Services Co-ordinator.
2. The Protective Services Co-ordinator will investigate complaints by validating and reviewing documentation submitted by the complainant.

Animal Control Complaints (verbal)

1. All complaints are to follow Township of East Zorra Tavistock guidelines.
2. Complaints other than canine are to be directed to the Protective Services Co-ordinator.

Garage Sale (verbal)

1. All complaints are to be directed to the Protective Services Co-ordinator.

Weed Control (verbal)

1. All complaints are to be directed to the Protective Services Co-ordinator.
2. The County of Oxford Weed Inspector will only investigate incidents concerning agriculture property and/or properties abutting these properties. Township staff are to contact the Inspector at 661-6085 with information on violation.
4. Complaints dealing with non-agricultural properties are to be directed to the Protective Services Co-ordinator

Waste Management (verbal)

1. All complaints to be handled by the reception staff or if necessary referred to the PW Manager.

Roads Complaints (verbal)

2. If complaint deals with a Township of East Zorra Tavistock road, direct the complaint to the PW Manager.
3. If complaint is in regards to a life safety issue (e.g. missing STOP sign) contact the PW Manager immediately.
4. If complaint deals with a County road, direct the complainant to the County PW office at 519-421-2203.

Water Complaints (verbal)

1. All complaints are to be directed to County Water Department at 421-2203.

Public Health/Sewage Complaints (verbal)

1. All complaints are to be directed to Oxford County Board of Health at 539-9800.

Parking Violations

1. OPP bring parking tickets into Township office, the tickets are then given to the Protective Services Co-ordinator.
2. The tickets are then notated as to receipt date and a follow up date, of 15 days later, is then scheduled.
3. If a ticket still remains unpaid after the original 15 day time period, a Final Notice will then be mailed out to defendant. This notice has a 7 day payment period. If a ticket is returned to with a request for a trial please ensure that the back of ticket is signed.
4. If the ticket remains unpaid after two weeks from date of mailing, the Protective Services Co-ordinator will then fill out a Certificate Requesting Conviction and deliver to Provincial Offences Court. This can be done two weeks after due date of the Final Notice. (this last measure will ensure that the fine plus court costs will be paid as the defendant will not be able to renew license or purchase new plate stickers until ticket has been paid)
5. Should we receive a call from defendant with regards to payment after step 4 has been initiated, please direct to Woodstock Provincial Offences Court at 539-9800

Zoning Issues (written)

1. All complaints are to be directed to the Protective Services Co-ordinator.
2. Complaints must be in the form of a written letter or email; however, certain situations will qualify for an investigation without a letter if there appears to be a bona fide health and safety concern.
3. An investigation report will be started and information recorded to determine if a case file should be started.
4. Investigations will be done at the request of the Protective Services Co-ordinator by the Chief Building Officer, or the Township Fire Chief, or other agencies, if necessary.

5. Information observed at the site will be documented by investigator(s) for review by the Protective Services Co-ordinator who will then consult the applicable by-law and confirm if a violation has occurred.
6. A letter will then be issued by the Protective Services Co-ordinator to complainant acknowledging receipt of complaint and advising of what will be happening.
7. The necessary paperwork will then begin to bring the property in question into compliance. The Protective Services Co-ordinator advises the offending party of the violation and compliance requirements. A reasonable time frame will be then be set for a compliance check on property. The Protective Service Co-ordinator then notates compliance date and books follow up investigation.
8. If compliance is met upon that date then a letter will be issued to offending party to advise.
9. If compliance is not fully met then the Protective Services Co-ordinator will contact the party to advise of enforcement procedure (depending on situation there could be charges being laid, a court summons issued, or the Township taking action to remove.)
10. Since Zoning Infractions can be resolved through a Zone Change or Minor Variance, compliance procedures will cease while a planning application is being actively pursued by the offender. Should the application be denied or not actively pursued by the offender, compliance procedures will commence.

General Provisions:

1. This document sets out general guidelines that are followed by Township staff with respect to by-law compliance activities. It must be noted that these procedures are guidelines and are subject to vary depending on the particular circumstances. The goal of the Bylaw Compliance Department is not to penalize the residents of East Zorra-Tavistock or visitors but, rather to achieve compliance through education and the provision of information in order to preserve the quality of life to which each citizen is entitled. While all by-law compliance issues are important and properly investigated, issues related to personal safety and protection of property are a priority for the department.
2. All complaints, both verbal and written must include identifying information of the complainant. This includes the full name, address and telephone number of the complainant.