

Complaint Process

Anyone who wishes to lodge a complaint against volunteers, staff, or Board Members or a service complaint shall submit their complaint, in writing, outlining the details of the situation, date and time of the occurrence, persons and possible witnesses involved, any other relevant information and desired outcome. Should they require assistance in completing the written documentation, staff members who are not involved in the incident shall assist as requested. Any accommodations required, including service in the French language, will be provided to allow the complainant to adequately participate in the process. The Executive Director shall be notified immediately, or as soon as possible, that a complaint has been filed along with a brief description.

Should an individual wish to lodge a complaint anonymously they can do so but will be informed that without knowledge of the complainant it is difficult to investigate the complaint completely or to follow up with them. They will also be informed that they may wish to lodge a complaint through a lawyer or another person with whom there is a formal, professional relationship. In these circumstances all information in relation to the MNVS complaint must be provided other than the name of the complainant.

An initial response acknowledging receipt of the complaint shall be given within two (2) working days following receipt of the complaint. Subsequent responses and outcomes of the investigation must be provided within thirty (30) working days with the knowledge that MNVS may require additional time, where appropriate, to complete the investigation. Additional time may be required in the following circumstances, but is not limited to:

- the individual(s) is on vacation
- medical issues
- unable to reach witnesses and/or complainant(s)
- more complex investigations requiring more time
- the need for consultation or
- other extenuating circumstances,

at which time, the complainant shall be informed of when the complaint will be investigated.

The volunteer, staff member or Board person being accused of misconduct will be informed of the complaint and that they have a right to respond to the complaint. Information provided in written format shall be shared with the complainant. They will be asked to respond.

Complaints regarding staff, volunteers, or service:

The Executive Director shall review the complaint and speak to the staff and/or volunteers involved in the complaint. The complaint shall be reviewed against relevant policies and procedures. If the staff or volunteers are found to be in contravention of any of the policies or procedures the progressive disciplinary process shall be followed, or other remedial steps as

deemed appropriate. The complainant shall be notified that the investigation has been completed and will be notified of any results that are pertinent to them, as appropriate.

If the policies or procedures are found to be inadequate, changes shall be made to the relevant policy or procedure, as appropriate.

Complaints regarding the Executive Director:

Any complaints involving the Executive Director must be immediately forwarded to the Chair of the Board of Directors. She/he shall review the documentation and speak to the Executive Director and the complainant. The complaint shall be reviewed against relevant policies and procedures. If the Executive Director is found to be in contravention of the any of the policies or procedures the progressive disciplinary process shall be followed, or other remedial steps as deemed appropriate. The complainant shall be notified that the investigation has been completed and will be notified of any results that are pertinent to them, as appropriate.

If the policies or procedures are found to be inadequate, changes shall be made to the relevant policy or procedure.

Complaints regarding a member of the Board of Directors:

Any complaints involving a member of the Board of Directors must be forwarded to the Executive Committee of the Board. If the member in question is also a member of the Executive Committee, he or she must recuse themselves from the investigation. The Executive Committee shall review the documentation and speak to the complainant and the member in question. The complaint shall be reviewed against relevant policies and procedures. If the member is found to be in contravention of the any of the policies or procedures the progressive disciplinary process shall be followed, or other remedial steps as deemed appropriate. The complainant shall be notified that the investigation has been completed and results that are pertinent to them, as appropriate.

If the policies or procedures are found to be inadequate, changes shall be made to the relevant policy or procedure, as appropriate.

Appeals Process

In the situation of service complaints and/or complaints involving volunteers and staff members, the complainant may choose to appeal the decision to the Chair of the Board for further review, within ten (10) business days of receiving the initial decision. The complainant shall indicate their reasons for the appeal in writing and address it to the Chair of the Board. The Chair will review and respond to the request for review within five (5) working days unless extenuating circumstances are present. No further action is available.

In the situation of complaints against the Executive Director, the complainant may choose to appeal the decision to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for further review, within ten (10) business days of receiving the initial decision. The complainant shall indicate their reasons for the appeal in writing and address to the Board of Directors – Executive Committee. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will review and respond to the

request for review within five (5) working days unless extenuating circumstances are present. No further action is available.

In the situation of complaint appeals against a Board Member, no further action is available.

If additional outside resources are required to complete the appeal/review process, MNVS may require additional time to respond to the appeal request and will advise the complainant of the expected timelines.

Training

All staff will be provided with annual training regarding the Complaints procedure. This policy must be approved by the Board of Directors prior to implementation. The policy will be reviewed by the Board on an annual basis or sooner, as needed.

Record Retention

All records in relation to complaints will be retained as per our Document Retention Policy for a minimum of seven (7) years. They will be maintained in a file separate from the incident file if the complainant is a client.

Related Policy: Serious Occurrence Policy

References:

<https://www.oiprd.on.ca/complaints/screening-complaints/>

<https://www.victimfirst.gc.ca/abt-apd/pa-pa.html>

<https://rubinthomlinson.com/when-declaring-a-complaint-to-be-frivolous-or-vexatious-employers-need-to-tread-lightly/>