

9814 Antioch Road (STH 83)  
PO Box 443  
Salem, Wisconsin 53168-0443  
Office: 262-843-2313  
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www.voslwi.org

## Complaint Policy

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Village Board, Administrator, Village Staff and citizens of the Village of Salem Lakes for processing and filing complaints. The Village strives to maintain quality of services, improve relationships between Village employees, Village Board members, the Administrator and the citizens.

### **ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED**

This policy applies to all Village of Salem Lakes departments, divisions, offices, boards, commissions, committees, Village employees and Village citizens.

### **POLICY**

It is the policy of the Village to accept and investigate written complaints as described in this policy and to assure compliance in accordance with Village Policies and Ordinances.

### **DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT**

It is important to recognize the difference between a complaint and a suggestion, observation, question, neighbor dispute, or simply a call pointing out a hazard or safety issue. Any citizen or employee of the Village of Salem Lakes can file a complaint. The elected official or staff member fielding the complaint will need to determine whether or not a complaint exists and which type it is. Examples of complaints include:

#### **Violation Complaint**

A citizen's complaint against a fellow citizen because he or she feels a Village ordinance is being violated.

#### **Non-Violation Complaint**

A complaint against the Village as the result of a policy or ordinance deemed unfair. It can also be a complaint against the Village because of what a citizen feels is inaction or an inappropriate response to a situation.

### **FILING A COMPLAINT**

It is necessary for the complainant to fill out a Complaint Form, which may be provided by any Village staff member. Complaints will be considered hearsay if a formal complaint form is not completed and signed. Unsubstantiated complaints such as anonymous phone calls or e-mails will warrant no action by the Administrator, Village Board or staff. The form must include a description of the complaint and be signed and dated by the individual filing the complaint. The Village Administrator or his or her designee must also sign and date the complaint form. If a response to the complaint is requested, the complainant must also provide contact information. The original completed complaint form will be filed at the Village Hall.

### **COMPLAINT RESPONSE PROCESS**

All complaint forms filled out will be turned over to the Village Administrator, or his or her designee who will determine the validity of the complaint. Once determined a valid complaint, the Village Administrator, or his or her designee, will communicate to the complainant, in a reasonable amount of time, the course of action if such a response was requested on the complaint form. The

person following up on the complaint and the date of follow-up, when that occurs, should also be noted on the complaint form. Matters not found to be substantiated by Village Code will be dismissed without action. If contact information was provided, complainants will be notified of the Village's decision not to pursue a complaint and for what reason.

### **Violation Complaint**

For complaints involving municipal infractions, the Village Administrator will review the complaint and complaint form. Complaints will be investigated for validity and resolution. If the complaint is found valid the following processes will be followed:

If this is the first complaint received, a notice will be delivered in person or mailed with affidavit of service to the offender, specifying the violation and action required to comply with the Ordinances or Policies of the Village of Salem Lakes. If the notice is returned as undeliverable, reasonable efforts will be made to locate the responsible party. These efforts may include the notice being hand delivered by a Law Enforcement Officer or process server. Notices will also include a reasonable time frame for compliance. The notice shall cite the ordinance and consequences of noncompliance.

In the event that compliance has not occurred in the time frame allowed or in the event of a second occurrence within 12 months, after the first abatement period has expired, a first offense citation may be issued. The appropriate municipal infraction citations may be issued for each occurrence thereafter as allowed. Each violation and each day a violation continues or occurs shall constitute a separate offense per Chapter 1 of the Village of Salem Lakes Code Section I-4(D).

Should citations be issued per Village Code, the citations will proceed pursuant to applicable laws.

### **Non-Violation Complaint**

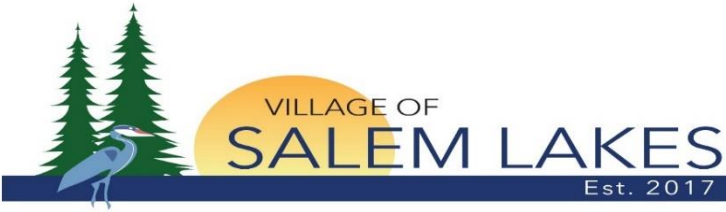
Steps will be taken on non-violation issues to be resolved by the appropriate body, preferably by Village staff. Example: the Administrator and/or the Highway Superintendent will review matters involving street repairs. If not resolved, the matter will be directed to the Village Board, provided the matter falls under such jurisdiction of the Village Code, in the event further administrative review is required, the Village Board will be kept apprised of issues in progress.

### **RESERVATION OF RIGHTS**

This complaint policy is intended to create orderly guidelines for processing various routine complaint issues. The Village reserves the right to proceed differently than described in this policy if the Village Administrator or Village Board da different action is appropriate. Among the possible alternative actions, without limitation, may be to: skip the Property Maintenance Notice and issue immediate citations; refer matters to other jurisdictions, such as to the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department or the Kenosha County District Attorney; proceed with statutory hearings, such as regarding police disciplinary proceedings; summary abatement of violations; Circuit Court litigation; taking no action, for example upon finding the parties have adequate private remedies; and other possible actions or inactions as the Village Administrator or Village Board may determine.

### **CONFLICTS**

Where this policy conflicts with applicable federal, State or Village Laws, codes, ordinances or other lawful regulations, such applicable Laws shall control.



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**Village of Salem Lakes Complaint Form**

Please complete the following information so that the Village can investigate your complaint.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

If requested, will you attend a Village Board meeting to explain your complaint? Yes  No   
If no, please explain why: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of complaint: (include the date, time, place, and facts of your complaint): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explain how you feel the complaint should be resolved: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Should a citation be issued, you may be required to testify to the above complaint in a court of law.  
Do you agree to testify? Yes  No

Are you requesting a response from the Village to this complaint? Yes  No

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*In accordance with Village codes and State Statutes all written documents, including complaint forms are subject to open records rules. This signed complaint is a public record and may be shared with person being complained about.*  
**All complaints must be signed and dated to be considered valid.**

**\*\*\*\*\* Village Hall Office Use Only \*\*\*\*\***

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Copied to: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator/Designee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow up completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_