

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Deaf Smith County Appraisal District

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1. Definitions and Introduction

The reason for this policy: The Deaf Smith County Appraisal District seeks to have a good reputation of providing the Tax Payers of Deaf Smith County with high quality services. We take seriously all complaints and we are committed to being responsive to the needs and concerns of the tax payers. It is our aim to resolve complaints as quickly as possible. We are committed to being fair, impartial, and confidential when handling your complaint. This policy has been designed to provide guidance to both our customers and staff on the complaint handling process.

Definition of a complaint: A complaint is an objection to something that is perceived as unfair, unacceptable, or otherwise not up to normal standards. It can also be defined as a statement that one is unhappy or not satisfied with something.

Therefore, if you are discontent with the actions of the Deaf Smith CAD staff and wish to express your dissatisfaction, or have unresolved issues and request a settlement, please follow the guidelines of this policy.

What a complaint is not. The Deaf Smith County Appraisal District is not responsible for how tax dollars are being used by the taxing authorities, nor any governmental policy. Also, a complaint is not an objection about the appraised value, exemptions or the assessment of property. There is a legal process to handle property tax protests and a taxpayer must avail themselves of that process.

Most complaints can and should be resolved informally. If you are dissatisfied with the service provided by us, please consider speaking directly with the staff member/s you have been dealing with.

If you are uncomfortable with this or consider the relevant staff member is unable to address your concerns you can ask to speak to the Chief Appraiser or the Assistant Appraiser.

2. Receipt and Recording of Complaints (Guidelines for Staff and Tax Payers)

Where a complaint cannot be resolved informally:

The complaint will be put in writing and given to the Chief Appraiser where the process to deal with the complaint will start.

- You will be given a copy of this “Complaint Handling and Procedure” document.
- The Chief Appraiser will assess options for resolution or list acceptable ways to resolve complaints
- And will keep customers informed of the progress of the complaint resolution.

For Appraisal District Staff:

Customers want their complaints to be easy to report, acknowledged, and dealt with quickly, fairly and sensitively. It is important that the Deaf Smith CAD staff know this policy and how to treat complaints fairly. Poor complaint handling, for example blaming the customer for the problem, or marginalizing them by saying no one else has complained, will only worsen the problem.

- i. **Listen to the complaint.** Accept ownership of the problem. Apologize. Don't blame others. Thank the customer for bringing the problem to your attention.
- ii. **Be understanding.** Be calm and helpful. Where possible, let the customer know that you will take responsibility for resolving the problem.
- iii. **Record the complaint.** Detail the complaint so that you and the Chief Appraiser know exactly what the problem is. Keep a record of the complaint and the actions taken to resolve it. This lets you see any patterns emerge over time. Complaints about a particular

- process or product might indicate that changes need to be made. Staff can also see what was done to resolve complaints in the past.
- iv. **Make sure you have all the facts.** Check that you understand the details while the person is making the complaint, and ask questions if necessary. This will also let them know that you are taking their complaint seriously.
 - v. **Discuss options for fixing the problem.** Do this with the customer, the Chief Appraiser or other staff members.
 - vi. **Keep your promises.** But don't promise things that you can't deliver.
 - vii. **Be quick.** If complaints are forgotten, they can escalate.
 - viii. **Follow up.** Record the customer's contact details and follow up to see if they were happy with how their complaint was handled. Let them know what you are doing to avoid the problem in the future.

We will also treat our staff member objectively by informing them of any complaint, they will be provided an opportunity to explain the circumstances.

For Tax Payers:

To help us investigate your complaint quickly and efficiently we will ask you for the following information:

- Your name and contact details,
- The name of the person you have been dealing with
- The nature of the complaint,
- Details of any steps you have already taken to resolve the complaint,
- Details of conversations you may have had with us that may be relevant to your complaint,
- Copies of any documentation which supports your complaint.

3. Resolution

- Within three business days of receiving your complaint we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint.
- We will undertake an initial review of your complaint and determine what if any additional information or documentation may be required to complete an investigation. We may need to contact you to clarify details or request additional information where necessary.
- Within 10 business days of receiving your complaint we will investigate your complaint objectively and impartially, by considering the information you have provided us, our

actions in relation to your dealings with us and any other information which may be available, that could assist us in investigating your complaint.

- We will respond. Following our investigation, we will notify you of our findings and any actions we may have taken in regards to your complaint.
- Where appropriate we amend our business practices or policies.
- We will record your complaint for continuous improvement process and monitoring through regular review, your personal information will be recorded in accordance with relevant privacy legislation.

4. Complaint Levels

If the complaint is against the Chief Appraiser the complaint will be put in writing and given to the Chairman or Secretary of the Deaf Smith County Appraisal District Board of Directors.

The complaint can also be filed with:

- The Property Tax Division of the Texas State Comptroller of Public Accounts.
- The Texas Department of License and Registration (TDLR).

5. Confidentiality and Data Protection

If you lodge a complaint we will record your personal information solely for the purposes of addressing your complaint. Your personal details will actively be protected from disclosure, unless you expressly consent to its disclosure

6. Aviso Importante

Para obtener información o para someter una queja:

Usted puede llamar al número de teléfono gratis a Deaf Smith County Appraisal District para información o para a someter una queja: 1-806-364-0625

Usted tambien puede escribir a Board of Directors of the Deaf Smith County Appraisal District:

Chairman of The Board of Directors
PO Box 2298
Hereford, TX 79045

Puede comunicarse con el Texas State Comptroller of Public Accounts, Property Tax Division Para Obtener información acerca de derechos o quejas.

Name of person making Complaint _____

Address _____

Phone number _____ email _____

COMPLAINT DETAILS

Date of incident _____

Who/What is the subject of your Complaint _____

Summary of Complaint / Issue _____

WITNESS DETAILS (if applicable)

Name _____ phone number _____

Address _____

COMPLAINT OUTCOME:

As a result of making this complaint, is there any outcome you would like? ___ yes ___ no

If yes, please provide details _____
