



REQUEST FOR DECISION

To: Regional Planning Committee **For the Meeting of:** February 6, 2026

From: Planning Services **Date Prepared:** January 29, 2026

SUBJECT: Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Policy Review – Draft Policy 5.5.1 and Manual

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Regional Planning Committee endorse and refer to Trust Council:
 - a. The revisions to draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy 5.5.1 as shown in the draft attached to the Request for Decision dated January 29, 2026,
 - b. The draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual, and
 - c. The Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Policy Review and Portal Implementation Plan.

DIRECTORS COMMENTS: The Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Best Practices Manual have been revised several times and are recommended for forwarding to Trust Council for adoption. The Implementation Plan ensures early training and communications and develops a process of regular reporting to Trust Council allowing for future adaptations and improvement.

1. PURPOSE

To bring back draft Trust Council Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy (Policy 5.5.1) and the draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual ('Manual') for consideration of revisions and referral to Trust Council for adoption.

To review an Implementation Plan that integrates two key initiatives: the comprehensive review and update of Islands Trust's Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Manual, and the implementation of the Bylaw Enforcement Portal using Cityview software.

2. BACKGROUND

In September 2023, Trust Council directed that "the recommendations from the Office of Ombudsperson Report titled: 'Voluntary Consultation on Bylaw Enforcement Policies and Practices within the Islands Trust', dated August 2023, be implemented, and that staff develop an associated work plan and project charter and refer to the Regional Planning Committee."

In September 2024, Trust Council received an update regarding the project so that Council may comment on the direction that Regional Planning Committee (RPC) was taking. Trust Council approved the project charter amendments which added the LTC Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Template, and endorsed "the continuation of drafting amendments to Trust Council Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy (Policy 5.5.1) and provide Regional

Planning Committee direction to create a plain language version of the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices manual.”

Trust Council Policy 5.5.1 (Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement) provides direction to staff on bylaw enforcement processes, procedures, and communications. The Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual is intended to be a public facing document that will describe enforcement policies and practices in plain language.

As directed, the Regional Planning Committee has been reviewing and updating both the policy and the Manual. At meetings in January, February, May, and July Regional Planning Committee worked through revisions to Policy 5.5.1 (attachment 1) and the draft Manual (attachment 2), with both referred to the Office of the Ombudsperson for comment following the May meeting.

At the July 18, 2025 meeting, RPC reviewed feedback from the Office of Ombudsperson, and made some revisions based on suggestions from the Office of the Ombudsperson. The Office of the Ombudsperson staff did raise the involvement of local trust committees in the draft policy, specifically in the policies stating that LTCs can direct the closing of investigations and the prioritization of investigations. Staff recommended that these policies could be supported based on the unique nature of the Islands Trust and that the policies establish a framework for how LTCs may be involved. RPC agreed and Draft Policy 5.5.1 was endorsed by RPC at the July meeting and forwarded to Trust Council.

At the Trust Council meeting in September 2025, Council reviewed the Policy and the Manual and endorsed both documents, along with a resolution referring the “health and safety issues” wording in Policy 5.5.1 back to the Regional Planning Committee for discussion for potential wording amendments based on the Ombudsperson’s recommendations.

Staff have reviewed the policy wording and have attached a marked-up version which:

- Provides alternate wording for the policies related to health and safety (specifics discussed below)
- Adds references to the “[BC Public Service Standards of Conduct](#)” in two sections which address officers’ approach to conduct and review of conduct.
- Adds a policy (6.1.6) authorizing officers to close files where a mediated solution addresses concerns.

There are six occurrences in the draft policy that reference “health and safety issues”:

- 2.2.3: Commencing investigations [“appear to cause health and safety issues”]
- 3.13: Issuing a ticket immediately [“an immediate threat to health or safety or the natural environment”]
- 5.1: Other potential contraventions observed during site inspection [“an immediate risk to public health, safety, or the environment”]
- 5.2: Entry Without Notice [“address urgent concerns about health, safety, or the environment”]
- 5.3: Legal Compliance and Fairness [“issues that pose a risk to health, safety or the environment.”]
- 7.1.2: Prioritizing investigations [“where there are health and safety concerns”]

All instances in the current draft use slightly different wording and relate to different stages of the investigation or enforcement process. In reviewing the current wording and implications, staff are recommending revisions to use wording based on legal and policy principles derived from legislation and case law:

- "Immediate threat" sets a higher, stricter bar for action (particularly entry without notice). This implies a high degree of urgency and imminence; harm is occurring now, or will happen very soon, and delay is likely to make the harm worse or irreversible. This term is used to justify the actions, such as no-notice entry onto a property under the legal doctrine of "exigent circumstances."
- "Significant risk" is a broader term that suggests a high potential for substantial harm, but the harm itself may not be occurring *right now*. It can encompass both immediate threats and situations where a serious potential for future harm exists if the underlying issue is not addressed in a timely manner. This term is recommended to justify initiating an investigation or requiring corrective actions more quickly than routine matters. It provides more flexibility for officers to prioritize and investigate serious matters, but they would generally still be expected to follow standard procedures, such as providing notice.
- Decisions related to these policies should be based on "reasonable grounds"; "reasonable grounds" is an objective standard, meaning a reasonable person, fully informed of the circumstances, would conclude that the action is warranted based on credible facts and information, not mere suspicion.

Based on these principles, staff are recommending the following changes (shown in track changes in the attached draft):

1. 2.2.3 - this policy provides grounds to proactively open files without a complaint. Staff are recommending that this be based on "reasonable grounds" that there is "significant risk" as there is not necessarily an immediate and urgent threat. This allows a file to be opened, but notice would still be provided for an inspection.
2. 3.13 – this policy relates to issuance of tickets without progressive enforcement. While circumstances may vary, staff recommend that issuance of a ticket without pursuing the steps of voluntary compliance should be reserved for urgent situations and thus based on "immediate threat".
3. 5.1 – this policy relates to other contraventions observed during an unrelated site visit. As this could be more or less urgent, staff are recommending that the standard applied be "significant risk".
4. 5.2 – as this policy relates to entry without notice, staff are recommending the higher standard of "immediate threat". Where the threat is not immediate, notice should be provided.
5. 5.3 – this policy repeats the standard for a contravention observed during an unrelated investigation and the same wording is recommended.
6. 7.1.2 – this policy establishes grounds for prioritizing investigations. Staff are recommending that, like in policy 2.2.3, this be based on the more flexible "significant risk" grounds.

Based on common principles, the above changes would establish consistent wording, appropriate approaches, and objective standards.

Minor corrections have also been made to the Manual.

Previous versions of the policy and associated RFDs may be found on the project webpage at: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/general-resources/bylaw-compliance-and-enforcement/bylaw-enforcement-review-project/>.

Implementation Plan

Staff have drafted an Implementation Plan (attachment 4) that integrates two key initiatives: the comprehensive review and update of Islands Trust's Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Manual, and the implementation of the Bylaw Portal using Cityview software. Together, these initiatives modernize how bylaw compliance is managed, improving consistency, transparency, efficiency, and public understanding.

The implementation will be phased across communication, training, go-live, and monitoring to ensure successful adoption.

Internal communications (all drafted, scheduled, or complete) include:

- A summary of key policy and manual changes and Bylaw Portal functions
- Brief senior leadership and managers to support staff
- Distribute internal communications (emails, memos, FAQs)
- Introduce changes at a Planning Services professional development day

Staff training (all drafted or scheduled):

- Develop and deliver updated training materials
- Provide hands-on practice using new CityView tools
- Deliver training sessions for all staff involved in enforcement
 - Note that that all Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement staff have recently completed the “Building a Respectful and Inclusive Workplace” training program which includes developing self-awareness, promoting trust, developing inclusive language and creating an intentional culture.

External Communication (mostly drafted except “cheat sheets” and standard site inspection reports):

- Prepare website updates, social media content, and public FAQs
- Coordinate timing with Trust Council adoption and CityView rollout
- Prepare trustee communication tools, including decision “cheat sheets” and standard site inspection reports

Measuring the projects effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, and communication outcomes over time includes (forms and tracking sheets drafted):

- Tracking metrics such as complaint resolution time, percentage of voluntary compliance, percent of appeals or reversals, volume of standards of conduct complaints, frequency of repeat or vexatious complaints, volume of public enquiries and web engagement, and staff workload
- Report semi-annually to Trust Council (Fall and Spring – with other enforcement updates). Adjust as needed based on lessons learned

Draft communications are attached and include a “project at a glance” to assist with social media, a project summary to assist with website content and broader communications, and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

3. NEXT STEPS

- March 2026: Trust Council consider adoption of the Policy and Manual
- September 2026: Trust Council receive report on monitoring and evaluation
- Semi-annual reporting on approved metrics

- Draft:
 - LTC specific decision making “cheat sheets”
 - Review and standardize site inspection forms for standard reporting to LTCs

4. ALTERNATIVES

1. That RPC not accept the recommended changes and refer the Draft Policy to Trust Council without changes.
2. That RPC request further revisions to the ‘health and safety issues’ wording and refer the Draft Policy back to staff.
3. That RPC request revisions to the policies authorizing LTCs to direct the commencing, prioritizing, or closing of investigations to remove or reduce the involvement of LTCs in bylaw enforcement.
4. That RPC request revisions to the Implementation Plan.

5. ATTACHMENT(S):

- 1) Draft TC Policy 5.5.1 - Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy – Blacklined Version
- 2) Draft Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Best Practices Manual
- 3) Project Charter v.3
- 4) Implementation Plan
- 5) Draft Communications Material (Project Summary; Project At A Glance; FAQ)

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Policy:	5.5.1
Approved By:	Trust Council
Approval Date:	March 11, 1995
Amendment Date(s):	June 6, 1997; June 6, 1998; June 13, 2003; December 5, 2003; December 10, 2004; June 17, 2005; March 10, 2006; March 13, 2019, December 2, 2021: XXXX, 2026
Policy Holder:	Director of Planning Services

BYLAW COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Purpose

The purpose of the bylaw compliance and enforcement program is to support the object of the Islands Trust to preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of residents of the Trust Area and of the province generally by ensuring compliance with local trust committee bylaws.

Guiding Principles

The following principles are intended to align with the mandate of the Islands Trust, adhere to the best practices outlined by the BC Office of the Ombudsperson, and ensure procedural fairness in all enforcement actions:

1. **Fairness and Impartiality:** Apply bylaws consistently, ensuring decisions are unbiased and equitable for diverse island communities.
2. **Transparency and Communication:** Provide clear, accessible information about enforcement policies, processes, and outcomes with understandable and meaningful reasons for the decision(s) made throughout the bylaw investigation and enforcement process to foster trust and understanding.
3. **Focus on Education and Compliance:** Emphasize public education and voluntary compliance with bylaws.
4. **Procedural Fairness:** Ensure timely notification of alleged infractions, offer opportunities to Respondents to be heard throughout the process, and guarantee unbiased decision-making.
5. **Proportionality and Discretion:** Tailor enforcement actions to the severity and context of the infraction, with a focus on voluntary compliance.
6. **Efficiency:** Prioritize significant violations that impact environmental sustainability or community safety, while streamlining processes for minor cases.
7. **Engagement and Inclusivity:** Collaborate with island communities to ensure enforcement practices reflect local values and consider marginalized populations.
8. **Accountability and Oversight:** Regularly review enforcement activities and maintain oversight to uphold public confidence and encourage local trust committees to update and align bylaws and to identify opportunities to make bylaws clear and coherent.
9. **Respect for Privacy:** Safeguard the confidentiality of Complainants and individuals involved in enforcement actions, in compliance with privacy laws.
10. **Administrative Fairness:** Ensure that standards of conduct complaints are addressed in a fair, equitable, and timely manner in accordance with the principles of administrative fairness.
11. **Cultural Safety:** Demonstrate a commitment to cultural safety for all those involved in bylaw compliance and enforcement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Islands Trust Council provides overall policy direction, approves budgets, and reviews performance through regular reporting.

Executive Committee provides oversight of enforcement across all local trust areas, and approving funding for litigation when requested by local trust committees.

Local trust committees (LTC) adopt and amend bylaws and are authorized to direct enforcement of their bylaws, ensuring that bylaws reflect community values through adoption of specific LTC enforcement policies and direction to staff on significant cases and potential litigation.

Local Trustees represent the interests and concerns of their constituents and may be asked to provide information to Complainants or Respondents, but are not directly involved in bylaw enforcement investigations.

Members of the public and Complainants are encouraged to submit accurate complaints in good faith, engage respectfully with staff, and uphold the confidentiality of enforcement processes.

Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers (Officers) are responsible for investigating complaints, communicating clearly with Respondents, determining if there is a contravention, and applying progressive enforcement actions proportionally, with an emphasis on education and compliance.

The Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement (Manager) is responsible for the overall administration of the bylaw enforcement program, including supervising bylaw compliance and enforcement officers, ensuring adherence to policies and procedures, and providing expertise on complex or sensitive cases. The Manager coordinates with other departments, ensures alignment with legal and regulatory requirements, and reports on enforcement activities to senior management and elected officials.

Senior Management ensures staff have the resources and training needed for effective enforcement, facilitates communication among interested and affected parties, oversees adherence to policy, and reviews complaints regarding the conduct of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers.

Planners and Regional Planning Managers assist in the interpretation of bylaws and ensuring consistency with planning objectives. They support enforcement officers by providing information on the intent and application of bylaws, and contribute to resolving compliance issues by providing compliance options to Respondents and local trust committees.

Legal Counsel supports local trust committees and staff by providing legal opinions on interpretation, advice on potential litigation, and representation in cases of litigation.

A. Definitions

1. *Bylaw Notice* means a ticket, with penalty, issued under the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act*.
2. *Determination Letter* means written decision provided to respondents on the outcome of an investigation summarizing supporting evidence, actions to achieve voluntary compliance, consequences of non-compliance, and information on the Respondent's rights to respond or dispute the determination.
3. *Discretion in Administrative Decision-making* means the application of the power to choose between two or more possible courses of action using professional judgment and expertise
4. *Frivolous complaint* means a complaint not having any serious purpose or value, often lacking in merit.
5. *Long-form information* means a complaint sworn before a Provincial Court judge by a bylaw

compliance and enforcement officer.

6. *Notice Letter* means a written document sent to a Respondent once an investigation file is opened summarizing the potential violation and providing contact information for the assigned officer.
7. *Respondent* means those responding to allegations of bylaw contraventions.
8. *Vexatious complaint* means a complaint made for retaliatory reasons or in bad faith and intended to cause harassment, or otherwise forms part of a pattern of conduct by the Complainant that amounts to an abuse of the complaint process.

B. Policy

1. OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 The objective of this policy is to establish clear procedures, expectations and standards for Islands Trust's bylaw compliance and enforcement program. The goal of the bylaw compliance and enforcement program is to achieve bylaw compliance through a combination of education, mediation and enforcement techniques. Bylaw compliance is primarily sought through an attempt to achieve voluntary compliance by a commitment to corrective action as soon as reasonably possible, and the cessation of bylaw contravention.

2. COMMENCING INVESTIGATIONS

- 2.1 Complaint-based investigations are commenced as follows:
 - 2.1.1 Complaints must be made in writing, by email, through an on-line complaint form or portal, by mail, or delivered in-person. Staff can assist individuals who may need assistance with writing a complaint.
 - 2.1.2 Anonymous complaints are not accepted.
 - 2.1.3 Complaints meeting the definition of a frivolous, repeat, or vexatious complaint are not accepted.
 - 2.1.4 All written complaints will be acknowledged in writing by the administrative assistant within 2 to 10 business days and recorded.
- 2.2 ~~Where a written complaint has not been received, i~~ Investigations may be commenced proactively, where a written complaint has not been received, in one or more of the following circumstances:
 - 2.2.1 By direction of a local trust committee;
 - 2.2.2 Bylaw contraventions appear to occur in setbacks from water bodies or in development permit areas;
 - 2.2.3 There are reasonable grounds to consider that Bbylaw contraventions appear to cause a significant risk to health ~~and or~~ safety ~~issues~~;
 - 2.2.4 Bylaw contraventions appear to occur as part of a building permit process or other permitting process administered by a local government or Islands Trust siting and use permit applications;
 - 2.2.5 A referral is received from a permitting agency that identifies alleged bylaw contraventions; or
 - 2.2.6 Advertising of unlawful uses.

3. INVESTIGATION AND PROGRESSIVE ENFORCEMENT

- 3.1 After receiving a complaint, it will be reviewed to determine whether or not it potentially falls within the local trust committee's jurisdiction.
- 3.2 A complaint that does not fall within the jurisdiction of a local trust committee may be referred to another agency with jurisdiction or the Complainant may be directed to the agency with jurisdiction.
- 3.3 If a complaint involves potential impacts to cultural heritage, all First Nations with rights and title in the consultative areas database will be notified.
- 3.4 If the Manager determines that there is no potential violation, the Complainant will be informed and given the opportunity to provide more information.
- 3.5 If the Manager determines that there is a potential violation, a file is opened, and the Respondent will receive a Notice Letter, providing a summary of the issue, contact details of the assigned officer, and encouraging the Respondent to contact the officer. The Complainant will be notified that a file has been opened.
- 3.6 The Officer will investigate the potential violation, including:
 - 3.6.1 Reviewing all relevant bylaws, policies, and procedures.
 - 3.6.2 Arranging a site inspection. Site inspections will be conducted in accordance with the policies in Section 4 below.
 - 3.6.3 Hearing from the Respondent and potentially from the Complainant.
 - 3.6.4 Reviewing evidence, including evidence gathered from a site inspection, the Respondent, relevant bylaws, or other sources.
 - 3.6.5 Reviewing all relevant infraction and legal history.
 - 3.6.6 Consulting with the Manager, planners, and Regional Planning Manager.
 - 3.6.7 Reporting potentially problematic, inconsistent or contentious issues to the LTC.
 - 3.6.8 Seeking legal advice where required.
- 3.7 Based on the outcome of the investigation, the officer will make a determination if there is a contravention.
- 3.8 Respondents will be notified in writing of the determination of an investigation. A Determination letter will include:
 - 3.8.1 The purpose of the letter, referencing any relevant investigations or prior communications.
 - 3.8.2 The Respondent's name, address, and the property address involved.
 - 3.8.3 Specific bylaw regulation(s) violated and summarize supporting evidence, including facts and documentation.
 - 3.8.4 Outline actions to achieve voluntary compliance, along with reasonable deadlines and monitoring processes.
 - 3.8.5 Potential consequences of non-compliance and information on the Respondent's rights to respond or dispute the determination.
 - 3.8.6 The Officer's contact details and any resources to assist with compliance.
 - 3.8.7 Copies of supporting evidence.
- 3.9 A Respondent may request that a determination of a contravention be reviewed by the Manager.
- 3.10 Complainants may request a review of a file by the Manager where the investigation has determined that there is no contravention.
- 3.11 If either a Respondent or Complainant is not satisfied with the review of a determination by the Manager, a written complaint may be submitted to the Director of Planning Services. The Director may make a determination singly or in consultation with the relevant Regional Planning Manager and planner.
- 3.12 Voluntary compliance may involve a Respondent requesting time to comply; or requesting that enforcement be paused, subject to local trust committee policies, while proceeding with an application that would have a reasonable likelihood of success in legalizing the contravention.

3.13 Where a local trust committee has adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw, an officer may issue a Bylaw Warning Notice or a Bylaw Violation Notice where:
~~3.13.1 and voluntarily compliance is not forthcoming within a reasonable time, or~~
3.13.2 There are reasonable grounds to believe there is an immediate threat to health, ~~or~~ safety, or the natural environment,
3.13.3 or a An LTC has adopted a relevant enforcement policy, ~~an officer may issue a Bylaw Warning Notice or a Bylaw Violation Notice.~~

3.13.14 Where Bylaw Enforcement Notices have proven ineffective in achieving compliance, or where a local trust committee has not adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw, or where a contravention is considered sufficiently egregious, an officer may recommend that a local trust committee undertake legal action to achieve compliance.

3.14.3.15 Complainants can request information about an open bylaw enforcement file at any time. The Complainant will be updated by the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer if:

3.14.13.15.1 The file is put on hold, along with the reason for this action.

3.14.23.15.2 The local trust committee has made a decision regarding the file.

3.14.33.15.3 The file has moved to litigation at which time the identity of the Complainant may become public information.

3.14.43.15.4 The file is closed.

4. INVESTIGATIVE APPROACH AND CONDUCT

- 4.1 Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers, staff, and managers will uphold the BC Public Service Standards of Conduct~~principles of accountability, impartiality, integrity, protection, respectfulness and service~~, to complement the required skills, education, and behavioral competencies listed in job profiles and within the Oath of Employment.
- 4.2 Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers, staff, and managers shall develop, maintain, and apply skills such as control of non-verbal communications, active listening, and building rapport with constituents.
- 4.3 When determining the appropriate and fair investigative approach and enforcement actions, the Officer should consider each person's unique circumstances. This includes:
 - 4.3.1 Conducting investigations with an understanding of the specific context and circumstances of the individual or property owner involved.
 - 4.3.2 Respecting cultural differences, demonstrate cultural humility, provide accommodations for individuals with disabilities, and ensure accessibility for those facing language barriers during the investigative process.
 - 4.3.3 Ensuring investigations are proportionate to the nature of the complaint and violation, considering factors such as the person's ability to comply, any hardships they may face, and their willingness to cooperate.
 - 4.3.4 Exercising discretion when determining the scope and approach to an investigation, providing flexibility such as extended timelines or alternative solutions when warranted by an individual's circumstances.
 - 4.3.5 Ensuring investigations will be free from bias or discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, socio-economic status, or other protected characteristics.

5. SITE INSPECTIONS

- 5.1 **Entry with Notice:** When entry onto private property is required to investigate a bylaw complaint, officers will provide prior written notice to the property owner or occupier, except in cases described below. Notice will include the purpose of the visit, applicable

authority under provincial legislation, bylaws and policies, and proposed timing consistent with legislation, bylaws, and policies adopted by the local trust committee.

Entry will occur only during reasonable hours, with efforts to minimize disruption and ensure respect for the property and its occupants. Investigations will focus exclusively on the specific alleged bylaw contraventions outlined in the complaint unless ~~other~~ observations provide the officer with reasonable grounds to believe that the situation may pose an immediate-significant risk to public health, safety, or the environment. Officers should answer reasonable questions related to the purpose of the visit and the bylaw complaint investigation process.

- 5.2 **Entry without Notice:** In exceptional circumstances, where prior notice is not feasible or where immediate entry is required as there are reasonable grounds to believe that the failure to enter may result in immediate threat to ~~to address urgent concerns about~~ health, safety, or the environment, officers may enter property as authorized under the *Local Government Act*. Officers will document the justification for entry without notice, specifying the urgency and applicable legal authority, and will notify the property owner or occupier as soon as practicable following the visit.
- 5.3 **Legal Compliance and Fairness:** Property entries will comply with the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, applicable provincial legislation, and local trust committee bylaws and policies. To ensure fairness, investigations will be limited to the specific subject matter of the complaint except where the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that the situation may ~~observes issues that~~ pose a significant risk to health, safety or the environment.
- 5.4 **Documentation:** Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers will maintain records of all property entries, including notice provided (or reasons for its omission), observations made, and actions taken.
- 5.5 **Reasonableness and Accountability:** Property entry practices will aim to balance enforcement needs with respect for individual privacy and property rights. Officers will act reasonably and proportionately, prioritizing voluntary compliance and education wherever possible.

6. CLOSING INVESTIGATIONS

- 6.1 Bylaw investigation files will be closed in the following circumstances:
- 6.1.1 It is determined that no contravention exists;
 - 6.1.2 Compliance has been achieved;
 - 6.1.3 On direction of a local trust committee; or
 - 6.1.4 If the Director of Planning Services concurs with the Manager that the contravention is of a minor nature, impacts are minimal, or it is not in the public interest to enforce.
 - 6.1.5 Complainants may request that the closing of a file be reviewed by another Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer or the Manager.
 - 6.1.6 If the Officer has facilitated a mediated solution between the parties that satisfactorily addresses the concerns, even if a contravention may remain, except in cases where the contravention poses a risk to involves health, safety, or the environment.
- 6.2 Respondents, Complainants and the local trust committee will be notified in writing when

- a file has been closed and the reason for closing the file.
- 6.3 Bylaw investigation files will not be reopened once closed. If a similar complaint is made a new investigation will be commenced.

7. PRIORITY OF INVESTIGATION

- 7.1 As bylaw enforcement resources are limited, investigations will be prioritized as follows:
- 7.1.1 By specific direction of a local trust committee;
 - 7.1.2 Where there are reasonable grounds to consider there is a significant risk to are health and or safety ~~concerns~~;
 - 7.1.3 Where adverse environmental impact ~~that~~ could result in irreversible damage if not prevented in a timely fashion; and
 - 7.1.4 Other contraventions of land use bylaws and other bylaws.

8. VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE AND MEDIATION

- 8.1 Efforts to gain compliance should be conducted using the principles and techniques employed in mediation in a process to:
- 8.1.1 Provide full information and exchange of information;
 - 8.1.2 Confirm facts;
 - 8.1.3 Explore opportunities for compliance;
 - 8.1.4 Negotiate a timeline for compliance;
 - 8.1.5 Reach compliance solutions.

9. REVIEWING THE CONDUCT OF BYLAW COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

- 9.1 A person concerned about the conduct of a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer, who is unable to resolve the concern with the officer or informally with the Manager, may submit a written complaint to the Manager.
- 9.2 If the person is not satisfied with the response of the Manager, or the complaint involves the Manager, a review may be requested by submitting a request in writing to the Director of Planning Services.
- 9.3 Complaints may be submitted by email or mail, setting out the issue or concern, providing any evidence, and any remedies requested. Complaints will be recorded, and confidentiality and privacy protected.
- 9.4 Written complaints will be acknowledged within 10 business days, and acknowledgements will include information about who will be reviewing the complaint, contact information, a summary of the review process, and an estimated timeline.
- 9.5 Complaints will receive a preliminary assessment, the reviewing staff person will contact the Complainant to obtain any additional information, and seek early resolution where possible.
- 9.6 Assessment of complaints will be guided by principles of administrative fairness, as outlined in Policy 7.1.1 (Administrative Fairness Principles), and the BC Public Service Standards of Conduct, and be conducted in a fair, timely and impartial manner.

- 9.7 Investigation of complaints should: define the issue or concern, gather evidence, maintain confidentiality, notify all affected persons, hear from all relevant persons, adhere to a timeline, and include an assessment of any risks. All steps in the investigation shall be documented, including all evidence gathered and considered.
- 9.8 The staff member conducting the investigation shall provide a written summary of the issues raised by the Complainant, how the investigation was conducted, the evidence considered, analysis in the context of standards and policies, the conclusion, reasons for the conclusion, and any actions taken or proposed to be taken.
- 9.9 The Complainant should be given an opportunity to comment on preliminary conclusions, and be given any information about appeal of the conclusions.
- 9.10 The written summary and conclusions shall be provided to the Complainant, affected staff member(s), and shall be filed.
- 9.11 Resolution of complaints may include:
- 9.11.1 A more detailed explanation of the officer's actions;
 - 9.11.2 Reconsideration of a decision, cancellation of a penalty, or closing of a file;
 - 9.11.3 Recommended changes to policies and procedures;
 - 9.11.4 Acknowledgement of an error and an apology; and
 - 9.11.5 A conclusion that the officer's conduct was proper.
- 9.12 If the Respondent is not satisfied with the Director's response, a formal administrative fairness complaint may be submitted under the Islands Trust 'Handling of Administrative Fairness Complaints' policy.
- 9.13 The Director may determine that a person who makes repeated, unfounded and vexatious complaints about the conduct of an officer or Manager be notified that no further submissions will be accepted from them on the subject of a specific investigation, and will be directed to other avenues, including but not limited to, the Office of the Ombudsperson.

10. BYLAW ENFORCEMENT NOTICES AND DISPUTE ADJUDICATION

- 10.1 Local trust committees wishing to establish a Bylaw Enforcement Notice and Dispute Adjudication system must adopt a Bylaw Enforcement Notification (BEN) Bylaw which:
- 10.1.1 Designates the bylaw contraventions that may be dealt with by a bylaw notice;
 - 10.1.2 Establishes the amount of the administrative penalty for each contravention;
 - 10.1.3 Sets the period within which a recipient may pay the administrative penalty or dispute a bylaw notice/request a review;
 - 10.1.4 Establishes a bylaw notice dispute adjudication system; and
 - 10.1.5 Establishes and designates screening officers.

11. LEGAL ACTION

- 11.1 If a bylaw contravention does not cease or if compliance is not achieved, a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer may make recommendations to the local trust committee, including taking civil action or closing the investigation without compliance.

- 11.2 Immediate legal action may be recommended to local trust committees if impacts of a bylaw contravention pose serious risk to persons or the environment.
- 11.3 *Offence Act* prosecutions may be recommended to a local trust committee under the following conditions:
 - 11.3.1 Offence Act prosecutions are to be used only for serious land use permit contraventions;
 - 11.3.2 A long-form information may be sworn only after approval by a local trust committee;
 - 11.3.3 Executive Committee has approved legal funding for the prosecution; and
 - 11.3.4 The long-form information has been reviewed and prepared by legal counsel.

12. LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEE ENFORCEMENT POLICIES

- 12.1 Local trust committees may adopt discretionary enforcement policies or procedures applying within a Local Trust Area. LTC policies should be consistent with Trust Council Policy and the legislated authority of the LTC. In adopting an enforcement policy, an LTC should consider the following:
 - 12.1.1 Prioritizing or deferring enforcement based on scarce resources, the impacts of certain types of contraventions, and community priorities;
 - 12.1.2 Establishing procedures and timing for property inspections, with LTCs defining the notice period;
 - 12.1.3 Enforcement of types of contraventions without complaint;
 - 12.1.4 The length of time for Respondents to comply, timing for issuing of Bylaw Warning Notices, and timing for issuance of Bylaw Violation Notices;
 - 12.1.5 Discretion in closing files, including the nature and urgency of the complaint or alleged contravention, the circumstances of the Respondent, and the impact of the contravention on the Complainant and community;
 - 12.1.6 Regular reporting to the LTC on open files; and
 - 12.1.7 Communications between trustees and the Manager.

13. BYLAW NOTICE DEBT

- 13.1 Debts incurred as the result of default on bylaw notices are payable to Trust Council and they may be cancelled if the Director of Planning Services and the Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement concur that contraventions on the subject property no longer exist, and/or it is not in the interest of Islands Trust to pursue the debt.

14. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 14.1 Information in regards to a Complainant is kept confidential. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed should litigation proceed or where a request for information is received under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

15. FRIVOLOUS, REPEAT, OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

- 15.1 A complaint that is made in bad faith or for vexatious and retaliatory purposes may not be acted upon if the Director of Planning Services and the Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement concur that it meets the definition of a vexatious complaint.

- 15.2 Complaints that form a pattern of conduct by a Complainant that amounts to an abuse of the complaint process may not be acted upon.
- 15.3 The Manager may refuse to open a file for a complaint considered to be frivolous or repeat complaint about the same issue.
- 15.4 In any of the above instances, the Complainant will be notified that no further submissions will be accepted from them on the subject of the complaint, the reason for it, may be advised of the circumstances under which it may be reconsidered, and that this does not prevent the Complainant from making complaints on different matters.

16. LOCAL TRUST COMMITTEES, TRUST COUNCIL, AND TRUSTEES ROLES

- 16.1 The local trust committee will be notified when a bylaw investigation file is opened, the notification will include the type of contravention and the street name where it is alleged to be occurring, but the name and address of the Complainant and alleged violator will not be included in the notification.
- 16.2 Local trust committees will be notified when a bylaw investigation file has been closed.
- 16.3 Trustees may make a written complaint alleging a bylaw contravention.
- 16.4 Local trust committees and trustees will not be involved in the investigation of a complaint, the preparation of bylaw enforcement reports, the issuance of Bylaw Notices, or in the adjudication process.
- 16.5 Local trust committees may request reports about specific investigations or about general enforcement activity in the Local Trust Area.
- 16.6 Trust Council will be informed of the volume and type of bylaw enforcement files bi-annually.

17. BEST PRACTICES MANUAL

- 17.1 The Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement will maintain a public Best Practices Manual that outlines practices, processes and procedures in accordance with the administrative fairness principles outlined in the BC Ombudsperson's report ["Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments"](#), March, 2016 or in subsequent updated versions of the same reference material.

C. Legislated References

1. [Islands Trust Act](#)
2. [Local Government Act](#)
3. [Offence Act](#)

D. Attachments/Links to Supporting Forms, Documents, Websites, Related Policies and Procedures

- Local Trust Committee Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy Template ([attached](#))
- [BC Ombudsperson's report "Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments"](#),

[March, 2016](#)

- [Best Practices Manual](#)
- [BC Local Government Bylaws>Bylaw Enforcement](#)
- Local Trust Committee Compliance and Enforcement Policy Template

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Islands Trust

Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement

Best Practices Manual

July 2025

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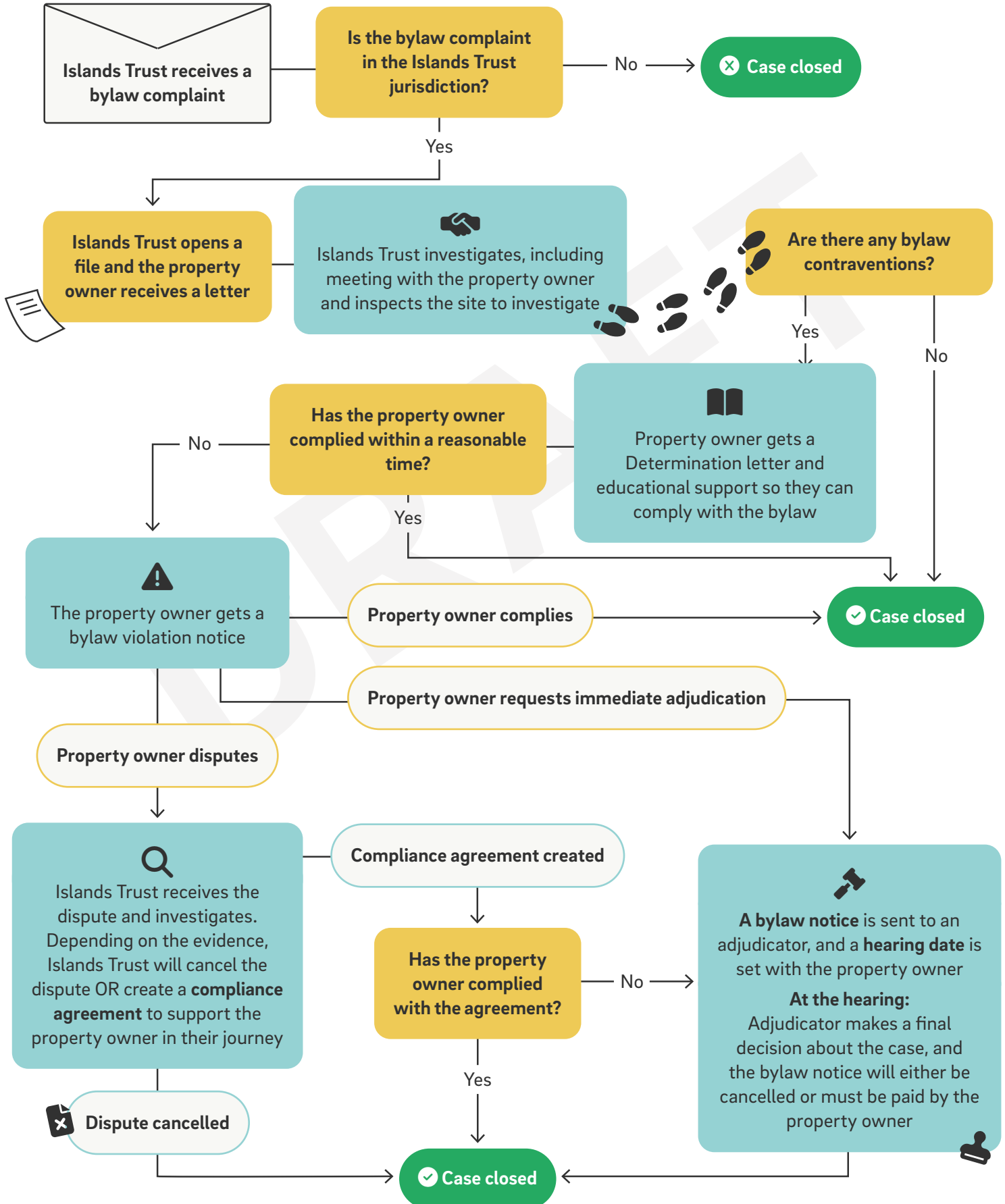
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Definitions

Adjudicator means an independent party whom the Province of British Columbia appoints to decide if a Bylaw Violation Notice will be upheld or cancelled.

Bylaw Notice means a ticket, with penalty, issued under the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act*.

Complaints a report of an alleged contravention made by any person.

Complainant a person who has made an official complaint.

Disputant means a respondent who has been given a Bylaw Violation Notice, and disputed it.

Local government refers to municipalities and regional districts which provide services to local communities. In this document, the local government referred to is Islands Trust.

Ombudsperson Office is an independent, impartial office of the provincial legislature that investigates complaints about unfair administrative actions by public authorities. It is meant to uphold transparency and accountability within public institutions by offering a free, accessible service for individuals who feel they have been treated unjustly by public agencies. The office does not have the power to enforce decisions but can recommend corrective actions.

Respondent means those responding to allegations of bylaw contraventions.

Screening Officer is an Islands Trust staff member appointed to review a disputed Bylaw Violation Notice.

Vexatious Complaints is a complaint made for retaliatory reasons or in bad faith and intended to cause harassment, or otherwise forms part of a pattern of conduct by the Complainant that amounts to an abuse of the complaint process

What is the purpose of the Islands Trust Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement program?

The Islands Trust works to preserve and protect the special environment and qualities of the Trust Area for the benefit of its residents and the province. The Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement program exists to support this goal and ensure public safety. This guide helps residents understand how the Islands Trust ensures people follow local bylaws. The goal is to encourage voluntary compliance with bylaws through education, mediation, and enforcement when necessary.

The Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement team looks into potential violations of land use rules set by local trust committees. The regulations are found in local trust committees' Land Use Bylaws; in Development Permit Areas within Official Community Plans; and in the Salt Spring Island Soil

Deposit and Removal Bylaw. Islands Trust has the legal authority to enforce these rules under laws like the *Islands Trust Act* and the *Local Government Act of BC*.

The Islands Trust has a policy, [Policy 5.5.1 Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement](#), that guides how bylaw investigations are handled. It explains how complaints are processed, prioritized, and resolved, aiming to do so fairly and effectively. Local trust committees adopt bylaws authorizing enforcement and may adopt bylaw enforcement policies specific to their communities.

The Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement follows best practices based on principles of fairness, as outlined in the report: [BC Ombudsperson's report "Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments", March, 2016](#).

Guiding Principles

- **Fairness and Impartiality:** Apply bylaws consistently, ensuring decisions are unbiased and equitable for diverse island communities.
- **Transparency and Communication:** Provide clear, accessible information about enforcement policies, processes, and outcomes with understandable and meaningful reasons for the decision(s) made throughout the bylaw investigation and enforcement process to foster trust and understanding.
- **Focus on Education and Compliance:** Emphasize public education and voluntary compliance with bylaws.
- **Procedural Fairness:** Ensure timely notification of alleged infractions, offer opportunities to Respondents to be heard throughout the process, and guarantee unbiased decision-making.
- **Proportionality and Discretion:** Tailor enforcement actions to the severity and context of the infraction, with a focus on voluntary compliance.
- **Efficiency:** Prioritize significant violations that impact environmental sustainability or community safety, while streamlining processes for minor cases.
- **Engagement and Inclusivity:** Collaborate with island communities to ensure enforcement practices reflect local values and consider marginalized populations.
- **Accountability and Oversight:** Regularly review enforcement activities and maintain oversight to uphold public confidence and encourage local trust committees to update and align bylaws and to identify opportunities to make bylaws clear and coherent.
- **Respect for Privacy:** Safeguard the confidentiality of Complainants and individuals involved in enforcement actions, in compliance with privacy laws.
- **Administrative Fairness:** Ensure that standards of conduct complaints are addressed in a fair, equitable, and timely manner in accordance with the principles of administrative fairness.
- **Cultural Safety:** Demonstrate a commitment to cultural safety for all those involved in bylaw compliance and enforcement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Effective bylaw enforcement within Islands Trust requires ongoing communication and cooperation between trustees and staff. While trustees provide the legislative framework and policy direction, staff members carry out these policies through direct enforcement and support roles.

Trustees

- **Policy Development and Approval:** Trustees are primarily involved in governance, including setting policies that guide bylaw enforcement. Local trust committees approve bylaws that regulate land use and community planning within the Islands Trust Area and are authorized to enforce those bylaws.
- **Strategic Oversight:** Trustees oversee the general strategic direction of Islands Trust, ensuring that bylaw enforcement aligns with the broader goals of conservation and sustainable community development.
- **Community Representation:** Trustees represent the interests and concerns of their constituents in matters related to bylaws and their enforcement, acting as a liaison between the community and enforcement officers.

Staff

- **Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers:** These are specialized staff responsible for the practical aspects of enforcing the bylaws approved by trustees. Their duties include investigating complaints, gathering evidence, and ensuring compliance through education and regulation.
- **The Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement:** leads the overall administration of the bylaw enforcement program, including supervising bylaw compliance and enforcement officers, ensuring adherence to policies and procedures, and providing expertise on complex or sensitive cases. The Manager coordinates with other departments, ensures alignment with legal and regulatory requirements, and reports on enforcement activities to senior management and elected officials.
- **Planning Staff** are not directly involved in enforcement, but play a critical role in interpreting the bylaws and providing recommendations to both the public and enforcement officers. They ensure that the enforcement practices align with the planning objectives set by trustees.
- **Administrative Support:** This includes staff members who assist in the administration of bylaw enforcement, such as processing complaints, maintaining records, and supporting communication between the public, trustees, and enforcement officers.

Are you concerned about something on your property and want to get more information? Your Trustee can be a first point of contact in this conversation, without starting enforcement.

What initiates a Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement case file?

Like all local governments in British Columbia, Islands Trust uses a complaint-based Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement process. This means that almost all case files result from complaints made by individuals in the community. Anyone can submit a complaint – you don't have to live in the area or be a resident.

As listed in [Trust Council Policy 5.5.1 Section 5.1](#), this system gives priority to those bylaw infractions of greatest concern to island communities:

1. When directed by a local trust committee
2. Health and safety issues
3. Environmental impacts that could cause irreversible harm if not addressed quickly
4. Other contraventions of land use bylaws and other bylaws

Once a complaint has been made, Islands Trust cannot decline to open a case file or decline to conduct an investigation because a complainant has changed their mind. Complainants are not victims of the offence and cannot “withdraw” their complaint.

In some cases, a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer can start an investigation even without a complaint. This happens when:

- Contraventions may cause health or safety risks
- Contraventions occur near water bodies
- Contraventions happen in development permit areas
- Contraventions are found during the building permit process
- Another agency refers a case involving land use issues
- Unlawful uses are advertised
- A local trust committee requests an investigation

How can complaints be sent to Islands Trust?

Anyone who wants to make a complaint can:

- Fill out the Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Complaint form on the Islands Trust website: <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/mapping-resources/report-a-concern/>
- Send an email to bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca

- Mail or drop off a letter to any Islands Trust office
- Complete a complaint form at any Islands Trust office

Complaints must be in writing, but staff can help by writing down the information for anyone who needs assistance.

Confidentiality

Anyone making a complaint must provide their name to the Islands Trust. Anonymous complaints are not accepted.

Islands Trust will try to keep the complainant's information confidential, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed during legal proceedings or if a Freedom of Information request is made. Islands Trust also receives referrals from other agencies (like regional districts) when they get a complaint that falls under Islands Trust's responsibility.

What is not a complaint?

Sometimes, people reach out to Islands Trust with questions about the Land Use Bylaw or Official Community Plan, not to report illegal activity. They may be planning something on their property and want to know if it is allowed. In these cases, a case file is not opened.

If a complaint is determined to be "vexatious", Islands Trust will send a written notice explaining any limits on communication, why those limits are in place, and when they might be reconsidered. These limits don't stop necessary contact with staff on other unrelated matters.

Questions regarding bylaw infractions can be sent to bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca

When are Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement case files closed?

Case files are closed if:

- If no contravention exists
- On direction of a local trust committee
- If the Director of Planning Services concurs with the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Manager that the contravention is minor and does not suit the public interest to enforce
- If compliance has been achieved

How is compliance achieved?

Ideally, bylaw compliance is voluntary, and primarily sought through a combination of education, mediation, and enforcement techniques. If voluntary compliance does not occur, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer may proceed with a bylaw compliance and enforcement process.

Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Process

The compliance and enforcement process at Islands Trust has several steps. Staff work with people involved (Respondents) and encourage them to follow the rules before deciding if there is a bylaw contravention. The process starts with discussions and education about the bylaws. If necessary, it moves to a verbal warning, then a written warning, and penalties are only applied if the person still does not comply.

First, staff review the complaint to see if it falls under the local trust area's bylaws. If no contravention is found, the complainant will be asked to provide more information, or informed that no contravention exists.

Some complaints are more urgent than others are, so not all will receive the same level of attention.

If a complaint falls outside of Islands Trust's authority, it may be referred to another agency. The goal is to handle referrals quickly, with a "no wrong door" approach, meaning everyone is here to help, no matter which agency is involved.

If there is a possible contravention, a new case file is opened.

A New File Has Been Opened

After a new file is opened, both the Complainant and the person involved (Respondent) will be notified in writing. The Respondent will receive a Notice Letter with the contact details of the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer (the Officer) and will be asked to get in touch. The Officer will also follow up with the Complainant to confirm details and ask more questions.

The Officer will then investigate the extent of the apparent or potential contravention and what may be required to achieve compliance with the bylaw. These are the steps the Officer takes when investigating:

1. The Officer will review all relevant compliance and enforcement policies that have been adopted by the local trust committees or Trust Council.
2. Typically, the Officer will conduct a site inspection of the property to meet with the Respondent, and gain an awareness and visual understanding of the property and the neighbourhood.
3. The Officer will gather details and relevant evidence about what has been built or what is happening on the property that might have led to a complaint by asking questions and

investigating. Bylaw Officers have the legal right to inspect, and local trust committees set policies on how much notice must be given to the Respondent before an inspection. The Officer is there to gather information only, not to make a decision, and Respondents will receive a written response regarding the case.

4. Based on evidence collected and a review of the relevant bylaws, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer will determine if there is, or has been, a contravention. If there is no contravention of the local trust committee bylaws then the Respondent and the Complainant will be notified and the case file will be closed. If a contravention exists, the Respondent will be sent a Determination letter, explaining the contravention and requesting voluntary cessation of the activity, land use, or construction.
5. If a Respondent disagrees with the determination made by the Officer, a review by senior staff can be requested.
6. If a Respondent needs more time to bring the property into compliance, a request can be made for more time to comply. If an administrative application such as a land use permit application has been submitted by the Respondent and there is a reasonable likelihood of success, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer will refrain from enforcement during the application process.
7. Where voluntary compliance has not been achieved in a reasonable time, the Officer may issue a Bylaw Violation Warning Notice or a Bylaw Violation Notice in local trust areas where a Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw has been adopted by the local trust committee. This Notice clearly explains what the contravention is, and the timeline for compliance. The Officer is available to provide more information to the Respondent so they can achieve compliance without penalties.
8. Voluntary compliance is always the goal. The Officer will attempt to support the Respondent to achieve voluntary compliance with educational resources, and negotiations.

Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers are committed to a professional and respectful approach. Here is what they do:

- Interact with the public in a respectful and non-confrontational way
- Approach investigations with an understanding of the specific circumstances of individuals involved
- Work within their authority; while they cannot issue stop work orders or tell property owners what they can do, they can request a pause on work while they review the regulations and investigate.
- Take time to carefully review all evidence before making a determination. They do not make on-the-spot decisions to ensure fairness and avoid any perception of bias.

Demonstrate cultural humility by reflecting on the cultures of themselves and those they work with in order to create and maintain relationships and trust.

Site Inspections

For most case files, an Officer will conduct a site inspection as part of an investigation. This is both to gain an understanding of the potential contravention and also to meet and hear from the Respondent. Except in rare and exceptional circumstances laid out in policy, Officers will contact the Respondent to give written notice and proposing timing of the site inspection. Inspections will only occur during reasonable hours, and focus exclusively on the alleged bylaw contravention, unless other observations pose an immediate risk to public health, safety, or the environment. During the inspection, Officers are there to gather evidence, and can answer reasonable questions about the process but are not there to make a final determination.

Communications with Complainants

When a Complainant completes an [online complaint form](#), they receive an automatic response, which thanks them for their complaint and advises them that they will be contacted shortly with an update.

Once the complaint has been received and reviewed by the Manager, Complainants are advised if a new bylaw file is opened. If a file already exists for the property and contravention, they will be advised that their information has been added to the file. Contact information for the investigating Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer is shared.

If the Complainant has provided an email address, they will be notified of a new file being opened by email. If they have only provided a mailing address, they will be notified by mail.

Complainants can request information about an open bylaw enforcement file at any time. They will be updated by the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer if:

- a. A file is put on hold, along with the reason for this action
- b. A Local Trust Committee makes a decision regarding the file
- c. A file has moved to litigation at which time the identity of the complainant may become public information
- d. A file is closed

Communications with Respondents

When a file is opened, a **notice letter** will be sent to the Respondent.

Once a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer has confirmed that a contravention of a bylaw has occurred or is occurring, the Officer will send a **determination letter** to the Respondent. The letter must be clear and easy to read and must include:

- A **reason** the letter is being sent that outline the problem, using a statement of what has been observed

- An **explanation** of how the bylaw has been contravened by quoting the bylaw and the sections that are being violated, and the definitions of words from the bylaw
- Outline of the **solutions** available to comply with the bylaw
- Explanation of the possible **consequences** of not complying
- A reasonable **deadline** that has been negotiated with the Respondent for taking next step or fully complying

Communications with Trustees

A local trust committee or any individual local trustee will not be involved in any aspect of the investigation of a complaint or the preparation of any Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement report. When a file is opened:

- Local trustees are advised of the general nature of the complaint, the name of the street (not the complete address), and the case file number.
- Local trust committees will only be kept informed about the status of an investigation if updates are requested.
- Local trust committees may request Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement staff report on specific issues. The reports will be presented to the local trust committee at a subsequent meeting

While local trustees can't be involved in any investigations, they are able to file a bylaw contravention complaint just as any member of the public.

Communications with Potential Property Buyers and Real Estate Agents

Potential property buyers, Real Estate Agents, or the public can contact the Islands Trust Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement office to ask if there are any Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement issues associated with a specific property. Staff can share limited information regarding whether an open bylaw file exists for the subject property.

Islands Trust does not provide information about previous complaints or investigations. That information would require a [Freedom of Information request, which can be made here](#).

When Compliance is not achieved

If bylaw compliance isn't achieved, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer will take the appropriate next steps which could include issuing a Bylaw Violation Notice, sending a Notice of Debt letter, sending a demand letter via lawyers, or recommending legal action to the local trust committee.

If legal action is necessary, the Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement will present a staff report to the local trust committee and Executive Committee, who then decide whether or not legal proceedings should occur.

Appealing Decisions Made by a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer

For determination made by a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer, appeals may be considered by the Director, Planning Services. In considering appeals of interpretation of regulations, the Director may consult with Planners and Regional Planning Managers. Such requests must be made in writing, outlining reasons for the appeal such as error of fact, omissions, or new evidence.

Reviewing the Conduct of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officers

Respondents can request a review of the conduct of a Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer by submitting a request in writing to the Director of Planning Services. If the Respondent is not satisfied with the Director's response, a formal [administrative fairness complaint](#) may be submitted.

WHAT IS BIAS?

Bias in decision making is generally understood as a pre-existing leaning or predisposition toward one side or another or a particular result.

Bias can creep into complaint resolution and investigations when decision makers rely on their personal belief systems, prior knowledge of a person, or personal relationship with a party or service user, rather than focusing exclusively on the information and evidence related to the complaint. It is important that staff who are handling complaints be aware of any personal biases that may be affecting how they respond to concerns from service users, and take steps to address any biases that have an impact upon their decision-making so that decisions are made impartially.

From the Ombudsperson Complaints Handling Guide

Public access to records

As Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement files contain confidential information and pertain to law enforcement, a member of the public is required to submit a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy [request](#) in order to obtain any information from a file.

Freedom of Information requests are an important mechanism of transparency that ensures public access to Islands Trust records. Islands Trust staff will assist members of the public to refine their request and procure relevant documents to their request.

Exercising discretion

One of the guiding principles of bylaw enforcement in the Trust Area is that enforcement actions should be consistent with the severity and context of the infraction. In law, local trust committees are not obliged to enforce all contraventions. This results in the exercise of discretion in enforcement at several levels by choosing between courses of action. Discretion in enforcement may be exercised by staff during investigations by providing flexibility such as extended timelines or alternative solutions when warranted by individual circumstances. Senior staff may prioritize or defer enforcement of certain types of contraventions based on scarce resources, impacts, or community priorities. Discretion may also be used to close certain files, where staff have determined that the contravention is of a minor nature, impacts are minimal, or it is not in the public interest to enforce. Local trust committees can also exercise discretion by resolution to prioritize enforcement of certain types of contraventions or to close specific files.

Bylaw Enforcement Notices and Dispute Adjudication System

Overview of the Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act

In October 2003, the Province of British Columbia enacted legislation providing an alternative approach for processing and resolving minor bylaw contraventions: the [Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act](#). The Act also provides direction, with the [Bylaw Notice Enforcement Regulation](#). Under the Act, local governments may establish a Bylaw Enforcement Notice and Dispute Adjudication system, which replaces the provincial court as the venue for resolving disputes of bylaw contraventions.

This legislation aims to create a straightforward, affordable system to enforce bylaw contraventions. It features a simple ticket process for enforcement and a way for an independent adjudicator to handle ticket disputes.

EXAMPLE:

The Galiano Island Local Trust Committee Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw No. 228, 2011.

This bylaw lists the administrative penalties that apply to bylaw contraventions in the Galiano Local Trust Area, as well as policies for disputing Bylaw Violation Notices, Screening Officers, and other features of the adjudication process described below in detail.

Implementation

When establishing a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw, local governments, including Islands Trust, should consider the following:

- Appointment of a Screening Officer: Define their powers, duties, and functions.
- Compliance Agreements: Allow the Screening Officer to enter into agreements and reduce penalties if warranted.
- Adjudication Process: Set a fee for filing adjudication requests and establish grounds for canceling penalty notices.
- Response Periods: Determine timelines for responses to Screening Officer decisions.

Records Management

Islands Trust administers and preserves all records related to the Bylaw Enforcement Notification system in compliance with provincial legislation. These records include:

- Bylaw Violation Notices and Warning Notices.
- Records of paid administrative penalties.
- Adjudicator decisions and documents related to collection efforts for unpaid penalties

Islands Trust Areas that have adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw:

Ballenas-Winchelsea Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 34 (adopted 2019)

Denman Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 232 (adopted 2019)

Gabriola Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 263 (adopted 2012)

Galiano Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 228 (adopted 2012)

Gambier Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 116 (adopted 2013)

Hornby Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 159 (adopted 2020)

Mayne Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 156 (adopted 2016)

North Pender Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 188 (adopted 2011)

Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 446 (adopted 2012)

South Pender Island Local Trust Area (adopted 2019)

Thetis Island Local Trust Area — Bylaw 90 (adopted 2011)

Islands Trust Areas that have not adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification Bylaw:

Lasqueti Island Local Trust Area

Saturna Island Local Trust Area

Bylaw Violation Notices

Bylaw Violation Notices

A violation notice is a formal enforcement tool. This type of notice assigns an administrative penalty, the amount of the penalty is listed in the Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw of the Local Trust Area.

In local trust areas where Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw have been adopted, a Bylaw Violation Notice may be issued after any of the following:

- A verbal warning
- A demand letter
- A warning notice
- Exceptional circumstances as outlined by the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Manager

Notices must include the respondent's name, contravention details, penalty amounts, and dispute options.

The penalty notice may be delivered by personal delivery or by mailing it to the person responsible for the contravention. If mailed, the local government may presume that the person received it on the seventh day after mailing. In the event that the intended recipient claims not to have received the notice, the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer must verify the address and reissue a copy of the Bylaw Violation Notice.

The penalty notice informs the respondent of the bylaw contravention, the penalty for the contravention; and how to pay the penalty or dispute the notice.

A Bylaw Violation Notice must contain the:

- Name of the Respondent
- Specific bylaw contravention alleged to have occurred and the location
- Amount of the penalty
- Amount of a discount for early payment
- Amount of a surcharge for late payment
- Consequences of failing to respond to the notice
- Payment options
- Dispute options

Bylaw Violation Notices must be written within six months of the occurrence of a contravention.

Although the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act* requires that the above information is included on a penalty notice, local governments may organize or supplement this information as they see fit. The penalty notice may also be electronically generated or hand written on a pre-printed form.

The following is considered when issuing a Bylaw Violation Notice:

- Will the notice encourage the person to follow the bylaw? The goal is to get compliance. If the officer believes issuing the notice will help, it may be the right step.
- The notice cannot be issued more than six months after the violation is said to have happened.
- The officer should be able to explain why the notice was considered an effective way to enforce the rules in each case.

There are four possible scenarios once a Bylaw Violation Notice has been received::

1. No response: if the Respondent doesn't respond within 28 days, a late fee is added. The total penalty, including the late fee, is due immediately and can be collected by Islands Trust
2. Not received: if, within 21 days, the Respondent claims they have not received the Bylaw Violation Notice, a copy of the original notice will be reissued
3. Payment made: if the penalty is paid within 14 days of receiving the notice, a discount may be applied. After 14 days, the full penalty amount is due. A late fee is added after 28 days. Payment can be made by cash, cheque, or money order to Islands Trust, with instructions provided on the Bylaw Violation Notice
4. Dispute: the Respondent disputes the Bylaw Violation Notice

Dispute Process for Bylaw Violation Notices

The person named (Disputant) in the notice has 14 days to request a hearing. After 14 days, they can only dispute it if the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Manager grants an exception. The process starts when the Respondent asks to dispute the notice, and the Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Manager will then arrange for adjudication. If the due date falls on a weekend or public holiday, it will be extended to the next business day.

The Dispute Adjudication system is used to resolve disputes about whether a bylaw violation occurred as stated in the notice or whether the terms of a compliance agreement were followed. A challenge to the validity of the local government bylaw, or a claim that enforcement of the bylaw infringed on the Charter Rights of the disputant, is not within the jurisdiction of the adjudicator. This must be initiated as a separate matter in the Supreme Court of British Columbia.

More information about detailed information regarding the local government dispute adjudication system can be found in the [Local Government Toolkit for Bylaw Dispute Adjudication](#). The [Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act](#) and the [Bylaw Notice Enforcement Regulation](#) govern this process.

Parties involved in the process of disputing a notice include:

1. **The Disputant:** the individual disputing the notice.
2. **The Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Officer:** the Islands Trust employee authorized to issue the notice.
3. **The Adjudicator:** the independent adjudicator with authority to determine if the notice is dismissed or upheld.
4. **The Screening Officer:** is an employee of Islands Trust designated as a Screening Officer under the relevant Local Trust Committee's Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw. Screening Officers provide a first opportunity to respond to a Bylaw Violation Notice dispute in an informal setting. A Screening Officer may conduct the review based on discussion or correspondence with the disputant, and can explain the process and potential consequences of formal dispute adjudication. Each Local Trust Committee that has adopted a Bylaw Enforcement Notification bylaw has also developed a Screening Officer policy in order to provide guidelines during the Bylaw Violation Notice screening process. Screening Officers are required to provide recipients with a fair opportunity to be heard.

1 Step One in the Dispute Procedure

A recipient of a Bylaw Violation Notice notifies Islands Trust in writing that they are disputing the Bylaw Violation Notice by:

- Completing and submitting the Adjudication Request Form that is on the bottom of the Bylaw Violation Notice. Forms can be delivered or mailed to any of the Islands Trust offices on Salt Spring Island, Gabriola Island or Victoria.
- Online at [disputing a bylaw violation notice](#).
- A letter or email indicating that they wish to dispute the Bylaw Violation Notice can be sent to bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca, or mailed to any Islands Trust office:
 - Victoria Office: 200 – 1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8
 - Salt Spring Office: 121 McPhillips Ave, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2T6
 - Northern Office: 700 North Road, Gabriola Island, BC, V0R 1X3

2 Step Two in the Dispute Procedure

The Screening Officer will review the Bylaw Violation Notice, including possible discussions with the issuing Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Officer. The Screening Officer will review the dispute request and may:

- **Cancel** the notice; or
- **Confirm** the notice and either:
 - › refer it to an **adjudicator** unless the request for dispute adjudication is withdrawn; or
 - › enter into a [compliance agreement](#) ↴ with the person.

3 Step Three in the Dispute Procedure

The Bylaw Violation Notice has now been cancelled or confirmed by the Screening Officer. If the Bylaw Violation Notice is confirmed, Screening Officer will discuss their decision with the disputant by phone, in person, or in writing, and may offer a Compliance Agreement with the recipient to subsequently reduce or cancel the penalty when the terms of the agreement are fulfilled.

4 Step Four in the Dispute Procedure

If the Bylaw Violation Notice has been confirmed, and the disputant wants a formal dispute adjudication, the Screening Officer will request an Issuing Officer Report and create a Screening Officer Report. The dispute process will now move to a Formal Dispute Adjudication, where evidence is presented and the adjudicator decides if an offence did or did not occur.

A Compliance Agreement includes:

- Acknowledgment of the bylaw contravention and acceptance of responsibility
- Remedies or future actions to be taken within a certain timeframe
- A way to verify compliance with the agreement
- Possible penalty reduction or waiver if the terms of the agreement are met
- The duration of the compliance agreement

If a recipient of a Bylaw Violation Notice fulfills all terms of a compliance agreement, their penalty is considered fully paid.

If the Screening Officer believes that the terms have not been fulfilled, they can cancel the compliance agreement and must notify the recipient of that fact by regular mail. The recipient then has 14 days of receiving that notice to either pay the penalty or ask an adjudicator to determine compliance. If neither action is taken within that time, the full penalty plus a late fee is immediately due to Islands Trust.

Dispute Adjudication

In accordance with local the *Local Government Act*, Islands Trust runs its own Dispute Adjudication System by working with the Ministry of Attorney General, which provides adjudicators experienced in local government land use bylaws. Once a Disputant confirms they want a formal hearing, the Manager will coordinate with all parties to set a date. Islands Trust will submit a package to support its case, which usually includes the Bylaw Violation Notice, the request to dispute, and reports from the Issuing and Screening Officers. This package, along with any evidence from the disputant, must be sent to both the disputant and the adjudicator at least one week before the hearing.

Adjudicators

The Adjudicator must proceed on the basis that the bylaw is legally valid. The Adjudicator has no discretion to reduce or waive the penalty amount. The Adjudicator also has no jurisdiction to deal

with challenges to the bylaw or claims of infringements of rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

An Adjudicator may not be an employee or an elected official of a municipality and may not hear a matter if they are reasonably thought to have a bias or an interest in relation to the outcome of that matter.

Adjudication Procedures

Section 18 of the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act* provides direction in regards to Adjudication Procedures.

The Adjudicator must provide the parties to the dispute with an opportunity to be heard:

- In person or by an agent
- In writing (including by fax or email)
- By video conference, audio conference, telephone or other electronic means

Section 19 of the *Local Government Bylaw Notice Enforcement Act* states that “Hearings must be open to the public”. Islands Trust provides a space for members of the public to watch adjudication proceedings at the Islands Trust Southern Office, 200–1627 Fort St, Victoria. Members of the public can request this information by contacting Islands Trust: information@islandstrust.bc.ca.

Evidence

The technical and legal rules of evidence do not apply and an Adjudicator may accept any evidence they consider credible, trustworthy and relevant to the dispute, including the evidence of any person. The Adjudicator may accept evidence in any manner, such as orally, in writing or electronically.

Determination

The Adjudicator will determine if:

1. The contravention identified in the Bylaw Violation Notice occurred as alleged, the notice is confirmed, and the penalty set out in the notice is immediately due and payable.
2. The contravention identified in the Bylaw Violation Notice did not occur as alleged, the notice is cancelled.

If the Disputant fails to appear, the Adjudicator must order that the Bylaw Violation Notice be upheld. The penalty is immediately due and payable to the local trust committee. The full amount of the penalty is due, not the reduced amount that would be available to those paying within 14 days of the original bylaw violation notice.

Notice of Adjudication Outcomes

An Adjudicator resolving a dispute about a Bylaw Violation Notice or a compliance agreement must send their written decision to Islands Trust:

- Within one business day for in-person or telephone hearings.
- Within five business days after receiving the dispute materials for written hearings.

The adjudicator's decision must be in writing and should include:

- The name of the Disputant
- The facts relating to the penalty notice
- A summary of the Screening Officer's decision
- The issues raised by the parties
- A summary of the evidence provided by each party in support of each issue
- The Adjudicator's assessment of each issue
- The Adjudicator's final decision

The decision is sent from the Adjudicator to Islands Trust. The disputant will receive the decision of the Adjudicator when Islands Trust receives it.

Cost

Islands Trust is responsible for the administrative work and costs of the dispute adjudication system. Islands Trust charges an administrative fee of \$25, payable by a disputant who is unsuccessful in a dispute adjudication. The fee is added to the debt only when and if the disputant is unsuccessful. If the disputant is successful, no fee is charged.

Judicial Review

The determination of an adjudicator is final and conclusive and is not open to review in a court except on a question of law or lack of jurisdiction. If a failed disputant or the Islands Trust believes that the adjudicator exceeded their authority, or made an error at law, disputant person or Islands Trust may seek relief in the Supreme Court of British Columbia under the *Judicial Review Procedure Act*. An application for judicial review must be made within 30 days of the adjudication decision.

Referenced Documents & Resources

- [BC Ombudsperson's report "Bylaw Enforcement: Best Practices Guide for Local Governments", March, 2016](#)
<https://bcombudsperson.ca/guide/bylaw-enforcement-best-practices-guide-for-local-governments/>
- [Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Complaint form](#)
<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/mapping-resources/report-a-concern/>
- [Dispute a bylaw violation notice](#)
<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/general-resources/bylaw-compliance-and-enforcement/dispute-adjudication-form/>
- [Policy 5.5.1 Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement](#)
<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/document/policy-5-5-1-bylaw-compliance-and-enforcement/>
- [Freedom of Information request](#)
<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/about-us/accountability/freedom-of-information-requests/>
- [Trust Council Policy 5.5.1 Section 5.1](#)
<https://islandstrust.bc.ca/document/policy-5-5-1-bylaw-compliance-and-enforcement/>
- Bylaw Violation Notice can be sent to bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca, or mailed to any Islands Trust office:
 - Victoria Office: 200 – 1627 Fort Street, Victoria, BC, V8R 1H8
 - Salt Spring Office: 121 McPhillips Ave, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2T6
 - Northern Office: 700 North Road, Gabriola Island, BC, V0R 1X3

Bylaw Enforcement Review - Charter v3

Regional Planning Committee (RPC)

RPC Endorsement Date: 05-24-2024

Purpose: To resolve bylaw enforcement matters efficiently and with minimal conflict by reviewing and amending Islands Trust Bylaw Enforcement policies and procedures to be administratively fair, reasonable and transparent with the aim of restoring public confidence.

Background: Islands Trust Council requested that the Office of the Ombudsperson undertake a review of enforcement policies and practices and provide recommendations at the March 2023 Trust Council meeting. In August 2023 the Office of the Ombudsperson's Consultation and Training Team submitted the 'Voluntary Consultation on Bylaw Enforcement Policies and Practices within the Islands Trust' report. At the September 2023 Trust Council meeting directed that the recommendations of the report be implemented, that staff develop a work and project charter and was referred to the Regional Planning Committee.

Deliverables

- Revisions to Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy 5.5.1
- Revisions to the Handling of Administrative Fairness Complaints Policy 7.1.2
- Revisions to Bylaw and Enforcement Best Practices and Procedures Manual ('the Manual')
- A public Bylaw Complaints and Enforcement document
- Updates and revisions to Bylaw Enforcement forms, templates and documents
- Training and information for Bylaw Enforcement Officers and other relevant staff
- Communications team work with planning staff to post regular Bylaw Compliance Review project updates to Islands Trust website.
- Development and review of an LTC Bylaw Enforcement Policy
-

In Scope

- Review the Report, compile recommendations
- Review current Trust Council policies
- Review the Manual
- Compile and review all LTC bylaw enforcement standing resolutions and policies
- Review selected policies of other relevant local governments
- Report to RPC with proposed revisions for direction
- Provide regular updates and recommended revisions to Trust Council
- Implement changes to policies and practices
- A legal review of draft documents

Out of Scope

- Amendments to bylaws
- Public consultation
- Referrals to LTCs
- External consultants

IAP2 Public

Engagement Level:

- ☒ Inform
- ☐ Consult
- ☐ Involve
- ☐ Collaborate

Workplan Overview

Deliverable/Milestone	Target Date
Draft Project Charter to RPC for review and endorsement	Feb 2024
RFD to Trust Council	Mar 2024

<i>RPC review of preliminary policy revisions</i>	May 2024
<i>Briefing to Trust Council</i>	June 2024
<i>Draft policies and manual to RPC for review and changes</i>	Sept 2024
<i>Referral of draft revisions to Ombudsperson’s office for comment</i>	Sept 2024
<i>Briefing to Trust Council</i>	Sept 2024
<i>Final RPC review and referral to Trust Council</i>	Nov 2024
<i>Endorsement by Trust Council</i>	Dec 2024
<i>Implementation</i>	Jan – Mar 2025

Project Team	
<i>Stefan Cermak, DPS</i>	Project Champion
<i>Robert Kojima, RPM</i>	Project Manager
<i>Warren Dingman, Manager C & E</i>	Project Manager
	RPC Planner
<i>David Marlor, DLS</i>	Advisor
Director Approval: <i>Stefan Cermak</i> Date: 05-17-2024	RPC Endorsement: Resolution #: 2024-001 Date: 05-24-2024

Budget		
Budget Sources: N/A – no budget has been assigned		
*legal review included in scope by RPC 02-16-2024		
Fiscal	Item	Est. Staff hours*
2023-24	Project initiation	20
2024-25	- Preliminary analysis and review	40
	- Drafting of policy revisions	50
	- Final policy	20
	- Updates to manuals and templates	40
	- Implementation	40
	- Contingency	40
	Total	250

*excludes any admin support, attendance at RPC/TC meetings, staff receiving training

Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project (Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy Review & Portal)

Implementation Plan

Communication & Training

Objective:

Ensure all partners (internal and external) understand the changes, why they’re happening, and how to apply them effectively.

Key Steps:

Internal Communication

- Prepare a clear summary of key changes
 - both of the policy changes and best practices manual, and
 - Portal
- Brief senior leadership team and managers so they can support their teams
- Distribute internal memo or email communications to staff
- Introduce at a PS Pro-D day to walk through the changes and allow questions
- Follow up at subsequent PS Pro-D day to confirm understanding

Staff Training

- Deliver training sessions (in-person or virtual) to all staff involved in bylaw enforcement and related roles (BCEOs, manager, admin support, RPMs, planners)
- Provide an opportunity for staff to practice using new forms, checklists, or software in a safe setting.
- Develop or update training materials, such as:
 - Checklists & flowcharts for day-to-day reference

External Communication

- Public communication plan includes:
 - Website updates explaining the changes
 - Social media posts and press release (following TC adoption)
 - FAQs for the public explaining how the new procedures will affect them
- Trustee Communication Plan includes: **(outstanding)**
 - “cheat sheet” – decision points for LTCs (note differences based on LTC Enforcement policies)
 - Site inspection forms for standard reporting to LTCs

Documentation

- Archive all training materials and communications for future reference and onboarding of new staff.
- Template for documenting staff conduct investigations.

Implementation & Monitoring

Objective:

Put the new policies & procedures into practice consistently and measure their effectiveness over time.

Key Steps:

Go-Live

- Official “effective date” for the new policies will be when Trust Council adopts them. Aiming for March 2026 Trust Council
- Director of Planning Services and Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement to be point persons to help staff and answer questions during the transition
- Ensure all updated forms, templates, software configurations, and signage are in place before the go-live.
- Assess effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, and communication outcomes. Track metrics such as complaint resolution time, staff workload, voluntary compliance, and public inquiries.

Review & Adjust

- Review metrics after 6 months (RPC – July 2026)
- Gather feedback from staff, the public, and committee/council.
- Adjust policies or procedures as needed based on lessons learned.
- Report back to Trust Council (TC Sept. 2026 – before new term)

Draft Metrics:

- Volume of complaints filed, (how) resolved or appealed
- Resolution timelines and case type
- Frequency of repeat or vexatious complaints
- Frequency of standards of conduct complaints
- Staff workload and hours per case
- Number of public inquiries and web engagement
- Feedback from staff, public, and Trust Council

Metrics Based on Questions:

Effectiveness

- Are the updated policies achieving their intended goals (e.g., faster resolution, higher compliance, building “trust”)?
- Have complaint volumes changed? In what way?
- Has voluntary compliance improved?

Efficiency

- Are cases being resolved faster without sacrificing fairness?
- Are staff spending an appropriate amount of time per case?

Fairness & Transparency

- Do staff and the public perceive the process as fair and clear?
- Are there patterns in complaints about the enforcement process itself?
- Are there patterns in complaints about enforcement personnel? Are behaviours contrary to policy? Have staff had fair and effective processes to address personnel complaints?

Capacity

- Do staff feel adequately trained and resourced?
- Is workload sustainable?

Communication

- Do the public and stakeholders understand the rules and procedures?
- Have public inquiries or misunderstandings decreased?

Improvement

- What feedback have we received from staff, the public, or council/LTCs?
- Are there unforeseen issues or unintended consequences?

Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project Summary

The Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project integrates two key initiatives: the comprehensive review and update of Islands Trust’s Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Manual, and the implementation of the Cityview Bylaw Enforcement Portal software. Together, these initiatives modernize how bylaw compliance is managed, improving consistency, transparency, efficiency, and public understanding.

Purpose

The project aims to ensure that bylaw compliance and enforcement are carried out in a fair, transparent, and efficient manner, aligning with Trust Council’s policy direction and improving service to both the public and staff. The introduction of CityView will streamline workflows, enhance reporting, and support better data-driven decision-making.

Key Components

1. *Policy and Manual Updates* – The updated Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and accompanying Best Practices Manual clarify procedures, define enforcement priorities, and improve fairness and accountability.
2. *Bylaw Enforcement Portal* – Implements digital case tracking, public self-service functions, and real-time reporting capabilities to enhance efficiency and transparency.

Implementation Plan

The implementation will be phased across communication, training, go-live, and monitoring to ensure successful adoption.

Communication & Training

Objective: Ensure all interested parties (internal and external) understand the changes, why they’re happening, and how to apply them effectively.

Internal Communication:

- Prepare a summary of key policy and manual changes and Bylaw Enforcement Portal functions.
- Brief senior leadership and managers to support staff.
- Distribute internal communications (emails, memos, FAQs).
- Introduce changes at a Planning Services professional development day.

Staff Training:

- Develop and deliver updated training materials.
- Provide hands-on practice using new software tools.

External Communication:

- Prepare website updates, social media content, and public FAQs.
- Prepare trustee communication tools, including decision “cheat sheets” and standard site inspection reports.

- Coordinate timing with Trust Council adoption and portal rollout.

Documentation:

- Archive training and communication materials.

Implementation & Monitoring

Objective: Put the new policies and procedures into practice consistently and measure their effectiveness over time.

Go-Live:

- Trust Council Policy Adoption (target: March 2026).
- Bylaw Enforcement Portal go-live (target: April 2026).
- Director of Planning Services and Manager of Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement will act as transition leads.
- Ensure updated forms, templates, and software are ready before launch.

Monitoring & Evaluation:

- Assess effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, and communication outcomes.
- Track metrics such as complaint resolution time, staff workload, voluntary compliance, and public inquiries.
- Review after six months and report back to Trust Council (target: September 2026).

Timeline Summary

- September–March 2026 – Policy finalization, internal communication, Bylaw Enforcement Portal configuration.
- January–April 2026 – Staff training and go-live preparation.
- April 2026 – Bylaw Enforcement Portal go-live.
- April–September 2026 – Monitor and report.
- September 2026 onwards – Report semi-annually to Trust Council.

Evaluation Metrics

Key performance measures may include:

- Volume of complaints filed, (how) resolved or appealed.
- Resolution timelines and case types.
- Frequency of repeat or vexatious complaints.
- Frequency of standards of conduct complaints.
- Staff workload and hours per case.
- Travel and enforcement costs.
- Number of public inquiries and web engagement.
- Feedback from staff, public, and Trust Council.

Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project – At a Glance

- Integrates new Bylaw Compliance & Enforcement Policy and Bylaw Portal (Cityview).
- Improves fairness, efficiency, and transparency in enforcement.
- Supports digital transformation and public accessibility.
- Provides training, communication, and monitoring framework.
- Launches in phases through 2025–2026 with Trust Council oversight.
- Evaluation and reporting back to Trust Council in September 2026 and semi-annual thereafter.

DRAFT

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project

About the Project

Q1. What is the Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project?

The Bylaw Enforcement “Modernization” Project is a Trust Council initiative to improve how Islands Trust handles bylaw complaints, investigations, and enforcement. It updates our Bylaw Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Manual and introduces a new online Bylaw Enforcement Portal to make the process more efficient, transparent, and accessible for the public.

Q2. Why is Islands Trust changing its bylaw enforcement process?

The previous system relied heavily on manual, paper-based processes and policies that had not been comprehensively updated in many years. The new policy and tools are designed to ensure greater consistency and fairness, clarify enforcement priorities, make it easier for the public to understand and track bylaw issues, and improve timeliness and communication with complainants and property owners.

Changes to Policy and Procedures

Q3. What are the main changes to the bylaw enforcement policy?

The updated policy focuses on voluntary compliance first, clear enforcement criteria, transparency, and fairness and accountability. These principles ensure that enforcement actions are consistent and grounded in procedural fairness.

Q4. How does the new Best Practices Manual fit in?

The Manual provides practical guidance to staff on how to apply the policy in daily work. It includes standardized forms, checklists, flowcharts, templates, and updated procedures to ensure consistency and clarity across all islands.

Online Bylaw Portal

Q5. What is the new Bylaw Enforcement Portal?

The Bylaw Enforcement Portal is a secure online tool that allows the public to submit bylaw complaints, check on case status, and access information more easily. It replaces email- and paper-based submissions.

Q6. What can I do through the online portal?

Through the portal, you can submit complaints online, attach documents or photos, receive confirmation, check complaint status, and access public information about enforcement activities.

Q7. Do I still need to submit a written complaint form?

No. Once the portal is live, the online submission form will replace the paper or email process. Staff will continue to assist anyone who prefers to submit by phone or in writing.

Q8. How will my privacy be protected?

Personal information submitted through the portal will be handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Complaint details will not be shared publicly or with the property owner except as required by law.

How the Changes Affect You

Q9. Will this change how quickly my complaint is resolved?

The goal is to resolve complaints more efficiently through improved tracking, communication, and consistency. The policy emphasizes early voluntary compliance and clearer follow-up timelines.

Q10. What if I receive a bylaw complaint about my property?

If your property is the subject of a complaint, staff will contact you directly to discuss the issue. The focus will be on working collaboratively to resolve issues before considering enforcement actions.

Q11. Will the process be the same on all islands?

Yes. The updated policy and manual ensure consistent procedures across all local trust areas, with flexibility for local policies where applicable.

Q12. When will these changes take effect?

The new policy and manual are expected to take effect once adopted by Trust Council (target: March 2026). The portal will go live in late April 2026 after staff training.

Transparency and Accountability

Q13. How will Islands Trust measure success?

The Trust will track metrics such as resolution times, number of complaints, levels of voluntary compliance, feedback, and staff workload. Findings will be reported to Trust Council at future meetings and be available to the public.

Q14. Where can I learn more?

Updates and resources will be posted on the Islands Trust website, including policy and manual summaries, a guide for using the Bylaw Enforcement Portal, and contact information for planning services offices.

Last updated: January 5, 2026

Contact: bylawenforcement@islandstrust.bc.ca | www.islandstrust.bc.ca